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STUDIES OF THE PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

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PREFACE

My design in this book is to study, not the portraits, but the Portrait, of Christ. I am not concerned with the products of Italian art. I am not occupied with a criticism of the various views which have been taken of Christ in literature. I am not even engaged in a comparison of the four aspects of Christ in the New Testament. The Portrait which I study is one hung up in the heart—the combined effect of all the different aspects which the Gospels reveal.

The work is not critical, but introspective. I do not seek to *paint* a Christ; I stand before the Christ already painted, and try to analyse its Features. Necessarily, I limit myself to that which is human. There is

something which is Divine; but, just because it is Divine, it defies my analysis. These pages confine themselves to that element in Jesus which grew. They seek to trace the steps of the process by which His earthly work was developed—from the dawning of the great resolve to the dying on the Cross. To complete the design I shall require to extend this work into another volume; the present reaches only to the Desert of Bethsaida.

G. M.

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND,
November 10, 1899.

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CHAPTER I

IN THE GALLERY

IN the gallery of human souls there is one pre-eminent figure. It has been the study of all artists, of all thinkers. From the most opposite sides of the building men have seen it, approached it, centred round it. It has been studied by the lover of beauty; it has been lauded by the lover of the commonplace. It has been examined in the interest of philosophy; it has been scrutinised in the interest of childlike simplicity. It has been admired as the embodiment of a creed; it has been eulogised as the negation of all creeds. It has drawn the eyes of the mystic who wants to soar above the world; it has attracted the gaze of the practical who find the world a home. Wise men have sought it in the pursuit of science; shepherds have sought it in

the guiding of their flocks; Herod has sought it in the policy of self-interest. Every avenue of the mind has been at some time a road to the Portrait of Jesus.

I wish as a humble spectator to take my stand with the great crowd in front of the great Portrait. I wish to approach it with the eye of the heart—not to write an essay, but to sing a song. It does not follow that the perception must be less artistic. I have read that on one occasion of the Gospel story a child was lifted up to see the Portrait of Jesus. That youngest student in the art-gallery had probably the view clearest of all. His sight was antecedent to all theory, to all argument. *I* should like to be that child; I shall try. I would approach the Picture as the child approaches it—without prepossession, without a cause to plead, without a brief to advocate. I would describe the Picture as the child describes it—rather by exclamation than by rounded speech. I would forget the language of the schools, the names of the theologians, the abstractions of the

logical and the learned. I would stand in the presence, not of a scene recorded, but of a scene passing. I would make the notes of a *reporter* rather than draw the inferences of a compiler. The Portrait before me is a present reality. The History may be a thing of the past; the Gospels may have their origin in obscurity; but the Portrait is a fact of to-day. It wants, not the annalist, but the spectator. It wants the eye of the child—the eye that has no yesterday, no preconception, no image of the past to read into the Picture. The youngest and humblest student of the gallery had advantages over the Twelve.

In this gallery there are many portraits of the religious life. Wherein lies the preeminence of Jesus? As I scan the various faces I become impressed with a fact. The difference between them and Jesus is not a difference of *feature*; it is a difference of expression—of motive. The moral features of a man's life are his *acts*; his expression is the *motive* for his acts. I have heard it said again and again, 'The portrait of Christ is not

original.' You tell me that you can point out the same features in Confucius, in Buddha, in Zoroaster. Of course you can. It is just here that the mystery lies. Nowhere is the difference of the portraits so marked as where the sameness of *feature* appears. It is from the ground common to all flowers that the flower of Jesus has sprung. Why do I wonder at the difference between the animal and the man? Precisely because I have established the likeness of their mechanisms; if they had opposite mechanisms, I should not wonder. So is it with Jesus. It is the ground *common* to Him and me that makes the mystery to me. It is precisely in the sphere of unity that the point of diversity rises. I marvel most where the fields meet.

Come, and let us see the truth of this. Let us look round the gallery of great portraits; let us measure Christ's with those of other masters. Let us place Him side by side with the sage of China—the strong, the solid Confucius. Is there a similarity between them? Yes; there is a marked likeness of *feature.*

Both have come to found a kingdom. Both have come to found an *earthly* kingdom. Both have proclaimed the value of homely and commonplace duties. Both have turned the eyes of their disciples to the trivial things at their feet. Confucius tells them to avoid flights into the air, to keep their thoughts on the soil of mother earth. The first public word of Jesus is almost on the same lines, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.'

Yet, strange to say, it is here and nowhere else that the difference appears. The originality of Jesus lies not in the 'what,' but in the 'why.' *Why* does Confucius value commonplace duties? Because he wants men to be worldly. Why does Jesus value commonplace duties? Because he wants men to be *un*worldly. To the sage of China the power to do little things is the proof of an *earthly* intelligence; to the Son of Man the power to do little things is the proof of a *heavenly* intelligence. To Confucius the blessedness of the poor in spirit is the sense that they are born from below; to Jesus the blessed-

ness of the poor in spirit is the sense that they are born from above — 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' And is not Jesus right? Do you think any man can pass through the ordeal of commonplace duty unless he sees something *out of* the common? I do not. I have never known Chinese work to be done successfully without a vision *beyond* the work. The boy does not learn his lesson by the light of the lamp, but by the light of the coming holiday. I do not think it is purely by present attention that work is best done. Rather should I say that the attention to the present comes from hope in the *future.* Yon poor clerk who bends over his ledger is not *sustained* by his ledger. His work would be badly done if he did not see beyond it, hope beyond it, dream beyond it. He could not bear his poverty of spirit if he had not glimpses of the kingdom of heaven. Very likely this kingdom takes to him a human form — the hope of promotion, the prospect of wealth, the anticipation of domestic love. None the less is it the vindication, not of Confucius,

but of Jesus. It tells me that I cannot conquer the hour *by* the hour. I must look beyond if I would get through it—on to the golden sands that are not yet upon the shore, on to the cloudless skies that still are far away.

Let us pass to another side of the gallery —from the sage of China to the sage of India. Buddha and Christ—the names are often linked together. And there is good ground for the union. There is here again a similarity—nay, an identity, of feature. They are both in the attitude of sacrifice. Both cry, 'Give, give!' Both have emptied themselves of a former glory. Both have selected poverty, privation, toil. Both call upon men to take up the cross. Both are seen ascending the steps of a Calvary.

Yet here again it is the similarity of feature that reveals the difference. Nowhere are these figures so unlike as in their point of union. The value of the cross to Buddha is the opposite of its value to Jesus. To Buddha the cross is a submission to human misery; to

Jesus it is a protest *against* human misery. Buddha calls upon men to realise their nothingness, to accept their nothingness, to bow the knee to their nothingness; Jesus calls upon them to resent the imputation, to deny the impeachment, to lift the burdens that humiliate mankind. To Buddha the bearing of the cross is a resignation to the state of humanity; to Jesus the bearing of the cross is a *resistance* to the state of humanity. Jesus calls on me to lift the burden of my brother, not because it is our common destiny, but because it ought not to be there. His own endurance of the cross is 'for the joy set before Him.' If, like Buddha, He *feels* that all flesh is grass, unlike Buddha, He would not *have* it so. He calls upon His brethren to *remove* the grass, to lift it up in bundles, to carry it away. This carrying away is the burden of Jesus. It is not the submission to pain; it is the resistance to pain. It is the bearing of a present load for the sake of a future freedom. It is no surrender to calamity; it is a bid for joy. It is the payment of a price for human

emancipation; it is the acceptance of a sore operation for the permanent cure of suffering.

Look at another figure—the sage of Persia, Zoroaster. Does *he* resemble Jesus in feature? Yes, very much. He comes to the world with a war-cry. He says, 'Things are all wrong; there is an evil Power fighting against God; arise and prepare for the battle.' Jesus, too, has the sense of a coming struggle. He, too, refuses to take an optimistic view of life. He, too, bids his followers prepare for a scene of conflict—for wars and rumours of wars. To the sage of Persia, to the Prophet of Judah, this world presents one and the same aspect —the aspect of a great battlefield on which the powers of earth wär with the powers of heaven.

Are *these* portraits, then, identical? No; the difference comes out just in their common features. Zoroaster says in effect, 'You are living in a fighting world; therefore put on the warlike spirit.' Jesus says, 'You are living in a fighting world; therefore put on the spirit of *peace*.' To Jesus it is not the warlike spirit

that *fits* for war; it is the rest within. The power that overcomes the world, with Him, is peace. His preparation for conflict is mental calm. It is by the lone hill-side that He braces Himself for the sea. The mind that enters into the struggles of His kingdom is the mind at leisure from itself—undisturbed even by the thought of its own foes. It is by the still small voice that the Elijahs of His army conquer the thunder, the earthquake, and the fire. Other founders of religions promise peace at the *end* of war; the promise of Jesus is peace *before* the battle.

Let us take one more figure of the great gallery. This time let it be not from the East but from the West. Let us select the man who beyond all others in the sphere of thought has caught the spirit of the Roman Empire—the Stoic, Epictetus. What is that spirit of the Roman Empire which he has incarnated? It is fortitude amid life's dangers, calmness amid life's tempests, fearlessness amid life's spectres. Jesus, too, has these Roman features. His attitude is ever that of the man who walks

upon the wave—who on the very crest of the wave has said to his own soul, 'Peace, be still.' Are, then, these two figures one? Has the deformed slave on the banks of the Tiber reproduced the courage of the Man of Sorrows on the banks of the Jordan? Is the spirit of the Roman Empire identical with the spirit of the Kingdom of God?

Nay, it is only their features that are alike. Put again the question, Why? and you will see the difference. I do not say that Jesus walks upon the wave more firmly than Epictetus. I do not say that the man of the Tiber is less free from fear than the Man of the Jordan. But they are fearless for opposite reasons; nay, is not their fortitude *valued* for opposite reasons? Epictetus stands upon the sea because he has conquered his passions; Jesus stands upon the sea by reason of a great passion of love—what we call the Lord's passion. Epictetus has reached fortitude by restraining the vital stream; Jesus has reached fortitude by enlarging the vital stream. Epictetus has won by suppressing emotion; Jesus has won

by the emotion of a wider interest. Epictetus has seen the mountains of danger dwindle because he has seen the world itself dwindle; to Jesus the mountains of danger have been dwarfed, not by the contraction, but by the extension, of the world. There are two ways in which I may lose my fears—by a diminution of interest, or by an increase of interest. I may pass through the furnace because I have ceased to feel pain, or I may pass through the furnace to save *another* from pain. The one is the courage of passionlessness; the other is the courage of pathos. The one has *crucified* the sense of danger; the other has eclipsed it by the sense of a greater danger. The one has conquered by the contraction, the other by the expansion, of the heart.

And this latter is the movement of Jesus. When He goes out into the storm, it is not because the storm to Him has ceased to seem violent. He does not deem it one whit less destructive or the least more desirable than it was yesterday. He does not estimate the personal danger less, but the impersonal

danger more. He has treasures of the heart in the storm; those whom He loves are in the wrecked ship. It is passion, not passionlessness, that drives Him forth into the blast. He, like the Stoic, can be dumb in the presence of calamity; but it is because He is absorbed in listening to the complaints of another voice whose loss in the calamity outweighs His own.

SON of Man, before whose Portrait I stand to-day, Thou art still unique, alone. Thou art never so unique, Thou art never so alone, as where others *touch* Thee. Thou hast in Thy possession treasures that once belonged to wise men of the East and wise men of the West; but in the sunlight where Thou standest they have become new. I used to say, 'I have seen this gold, this frankincense, and this myrrh, before.' So I have; but in *Thy* presence the gold is more glittering, the myrrh more precious, the frankincense more fragrant. Others have stood on the same Mount with Thee; but Thou alone hast caught the glory. To me Thou

speakest ever, not *on* the Mount, but *from* the Mount. Thy voice is from aloft; I am always below it. Even where it says old things I am always below it. I may have seen the *painted* rainbow before I saw the rainbow in the sky; yet the rainbow in the sky remains original. So is it with my sight of *Thee*. Thy face gives new meaning to the instincts of my soul. Old words on Thy lips become winged. Plain chords on Thy harp become melody. Truths spoken long ago become discoveries in *Thee*. The trite terms of endearment that man utters to man thrill with the surprise of pathos when they are uttered by *Thee*. The language is from Bethlehem, but the accent is from Heaven.

CHAPTER II

THE ANTICIPATION OF CHRISTMAS

OF the spectators of the Portrait of Jesus there are some who have been in the gallery since the morning. They were there before the Portrait was brought in; they expected it. In one sense, all admiration of art is the result of anticipation. I can only admire what is already in my soul. If I shed tears over a picture of love, it is because it appeals to an old experience. Love cannot be painted; only its manifestation can be painted. If the feeling is not previously within, the manifestation will not *put* it there. The Portrait of Jesus is no exception. There are some in that gallery who have appreciated it from the very outset. They could only do so on the principle that Christmas *light* is older than Christmas Day. Had the Portrait of

Jesus been foreign to the world, the world would never have accepted it. When Peter recognised its beauty he was declared to be blessed; but why? Was it because he had received a revelation from the portrait? Exactly the reverse. It was because he had received a revelation which the mere portrait could never have given him—'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.'

To my mind the great miracle of the land of Palestine is its anticipation of Christianity. And let me say that this miracle remains when the scissors of criticism have clipped away everything else. Though Moses should be sent back to Egypt, though Daniel should be devoured by the lions, though Isaiah should again be sawn asunder, though David should be robbed of his harp, though Solomon should be deprived of his song, though Job should receive severer buffetings than ever he got from his friends, the miracle remains. It is independent of the authorship of books; it would be undimmed by the proof that the

books were forgeries. What is this miracle of Jewish history? The Portrait hangs in an enchanted gallery; where lies the secret of the enchantment? Let us look round, and see.

At first we see nothing. Everything in the building seems made to *dis*enchant. Never have I seen so great a portrait in so contemptible a frame, in so mean a room. What is this land of Palestine which is the background of the Picture? A narrow strip of almost imprisoned soil. About a hundred and forty miles measure its length; an average of forty constitutes its breadth. It is small room for walking in. Yet, within these limits nature seems determined to enclose it; she has shut it in, and turned the key. On every side there is a wall, an impeding of free intercourse. On the north rise the Lebanon ranges. On the south yawns the desert of Sinai. On the east stretches the valley of Jordan. On the west lave the blue waters of the Mediterranean. One would say that in this land God had specially fulfilled His

purpose of barring man from the gates of Eden; for here the cherubim and the flaming sword turn in every direction to keep the way of the tree of life.

Perhaps you will tell me that, like Noah in the ark, Palestine has escaped the *flood* by being shut in. It has not. No nation has had so little time on Mount Ararat, such brief snatches of rest. Its peculiarity does not come from its changelessness. It has never worn a permanent garb. It has shifted its governments continually. It has been successively a wandering tribe, an assemblage of clans under a chief, a people under a lawgiver, a race ruled by military leaders, a state subject to a king, a province swayed by foreign governors, a community dominated by its own priesthood. Truly there is nothing in the history of this land which could have suggested to itself the pride of permanence!

Nor is there aught in the secular attainments of this land which could have suggested this pride. Take away its God, and nothing remains. It might well say, 'The *Lord* is my

sun and my shield.' I see within its treasury few temporal gifts. The land which gave the great Portrait to the gallery is itself without art. It likes neither pictures nor statues. It has no theories of philosophy, no schools for the wisdom of man. I doubt if it has even an eye for nature. Its poets are all psalmists; they sing no beauty but the beauty of God. If they praise the sun, it is because *He* 'has set a tabernacle' there. If they laud the genial breezes, it is because *He* 'rides upon the wings of the wind.' If they feel the grandeur of the storm, it is because *His* voice 'breaketh the cedars.' If they sing of the river, it is not to tell of its majestic sweep, but to indicate how it 'makes glad the city of *God*.' If they rejoice in the harvest fields, it is because they see in the mellow autumn *His* 'crowning of the year.' This land is secularly weak all round; God alone is its refuge and its strength. It has no deep thought like India, no genius for stability like China, no sense of beauty like Greece, no high culture like Egypt, no powerful armies

like Rome. In itself it is a bundle of negations. Its very law is less a command to do right than a prohibition to do wrong. It seems a poor soil for a great planting.

Yet the planting has been tremendous. This small patch of naturally unproductive ground has made a claim which takes the breath away. It has professed to give a king to the whole world! This, and nothing less than this, is the consistent and persistent claim of the Jewish race. It is never so persistent as when the natural barrenness is most pronounced. Rome may have cherished such a hope in the days of her splendour. But Judah's boast of empire is loudest in the days of her dilapidation. Nowhere is her music so triumphant as when the string of her harp is broken. In the time of prosperity she is almost silent; but when the clouds come, she sings. It is from the chains of captivity that her voice sounds most imperious; her songs of jubilee are songs in the night. Her King is coming—her conquering King. His dominion shall be boundless, endless. He shall establish through all lands

a reign of righteousness. I do not think it is *physical* conquest that is ever contemplated. 'The Gentiles shall come to His *light*, and kings to the *brightness* of His rising.' They are to be drawn by the beauty of a *spectacle*—not driven by the force of a *blow*. The enemies of this King are to be pierced; but they are to be pierced with arrows of light. They are to fall down before Him, not from dread, but from love, of Him. He is to gather all nations because He is to be 'the desire of all nations.' His kingdom is to be imperishable because it is to be humanitarian—for man as man. That is the claim of a nation which itself, physically and mentally, has always been but a fragment of humanity—impressed with its own monopoly, and unsympathetic with the world at large.

But now, to me standing in the gallery to-day, there comes a second wonder. This bold dream has been realised; this Portrait has dominated the world. It has dominated even those parts of the world which have not taken the Christian name. The nations in

front of the Portrait have become the leading nations, the light-bearing nations; like the sun and moon of the third morning they have been set to rule both the day and the night. The Christian creed is limited; the Christian air is *un*limited. It has set in motion currents of which it may literally be said 'their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.' 'Thou hast received tribute even among the rebellious,' sings one of the poets of Israel. Christianity is not confined to Christendom. Mohammedanism is confined to Mohammedans, and Buddhism to Buddhists, and Parseeism to Parsees; but Christ radiates beyond Christians. As on the Resurrection morning, so ever, He comes through shut doors. Think you that a Pagan born to-day would be in the same position as a Pagan born before the first Christmas? Not though through all his life he should never *hear* of Jesus. Imagine that you and I were standing, strangers to each other, on the opposite shores of a silent sea—a sea that had never known a ripple on its bosom.

Imagine that into that silent sea I were to cast a pebble. You would not see the pebble; you would not detect the hand; you would not recognise the agent; but you would be influenced all the same. The ripple would reach you. It would go all over the water—the length of it, the breadth of it. It would be as when the Spirit of God moved on the face of the great deep; the silence would speak.

So is it with what one of our poets calls the 'dead seas of man.' Christianity has thrown a pebble into them, and they have rippled all over. They have caught the influence of deeds they have never known. The ships upon their bosom have begun to move, stirred by an atmosphere that belongs to other lands. The movement of the Christian West has accelerated the un-Christian East. India marches quicker; China steps more lightly; Japan becomes almost European. Lands that have not caught the light of the Portrait have received the glow of those who have seen it; for good as well as evil is contagious, and the cup of blessing can be transmitted where the out-

pouring hand is hid from view. I presume this is what Paul means when he says of the Son of Man, 'He is the saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.'

A wonder yet remains, and it completes the miracle of Palestine. The nation has rejected the fulfilment of her own dream. She has given a king to the world, and she has refused to crown him. I have read in one of George Macdonald's novels of a born-blind lamplighter. He illuminated the city at night; but he had no sense of what he was doing. So has it been with this land. She has presented the Portrait to the gallery; she has heard the plaudits of the spectators; and she has refused to join in them. In all history there is nothing so unique. It is the *enemies* of this land that have crowned her world-king; it is the Gentiles that have come to His light. The lamplighter has been blind to the beauty of that throne which she has illuminated. Palestine has lit up the scene; she has listened to the crowd shouting their applause; and she has wondered why. She has been like a deaf-mute in a

concert-room. She has struck by accident the notes of a harp, and by accident they have burst into music. The audience has cheered the performance to the echo; but the performer knows not her triumph.

O LAND of wonder! we bring thee a Christmas wreath to-day—a wreath composed of thine own rejected flowers. Thou hast cast them out upon the highway, and we have found them there; we gather them and bring them back to thee. We offer them to thee as gifts of the world's new year. Thou hast *made* the world's new year. Thou hast illuminated our cities without seeing the glory. Thou art standing blind amid the blaze which thou hast kindled; thou art seated deaf amid the music which thou hast created. Thou art waiting through all the winters for the fulfilment of thy dream; and *we* are already basking in its fulfilment. Thou hast opened our paradise, and shut the door upon thyself. Wilt thou not enter into *our* rest—the rest thou hast given to

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us? Wilt thou not share the beauty of thine own illumination, the vibrations of thine own music? Wilt thou not participate with us in the glory of that gift which thou hast presented to the great gallery? Our pleasure is not complete till it is shared by *thee.*

CHAPTER III

THE MISSION OF JESUS

WHAT is the meaning of this Face in the great gallery? There are some countenances which bear on every feature the stamp of a purpose. This is one. No man can look at it without being impressed with the fact that it is meant to depict a soul with a mission. What is that mission? It is a question on which there is no agreement. Men have come to study the Portrait from all parts; but each has given it a meaning peculiar to his own country. Renan has come all the way from Paris to see it, but he has seen in it only the *atmosphere* of Paris. He has beheld an æsthetic soul inspired by the enthusiasm of beauty, and inspiring by his *own* beauty—a fair Galilean drawing all hearts by his Parisian charm. Schenkel has come from Berlin, and he has brought the *air* of

Berlin. He looks into the face of Jesus and reads there what he feels in himself. He sees a German heretic struggling with orthodoxy—a mind impressed with new speculative ideas, and obstructed by the narrowness of the priesthood. Seeley has come from London, and he has brought to the Portrait the *eye* of London. To him it is the countenance of an Englishman. It breathes, above all things, practical common sense. It is not the face of an æsthetic; it is not the countenance of a heretic; it is the portrait of a reformer. It is the delineation of a man imbued with the enthusiasm of humanity, indignant at social abuses, and eager to right the wrong.

In these voices from Paris, Berlin, and London, I recognise one common note. They all assume that the Portrait is a revolutionary portrait. They take for granted that it expresses Paris, Berlin, and London, rather than Jerusalem. But I see a critic standing more directly in front of the Portrait than any of these; it is a man called Paul. He has been first in the gallery, and has

obtained a very near view. At the outset he shared the national antipathy to the Portrait. He did so because he held the belief of these other critics that the Picture was not Jewish, but revolutionary to the Jew. He has changed his mind; he has come to an opposite conclusion. From the front seat of the gallery he looks back to the critics of Paris, of Berlin, of London. He says: 'You are all in a mistake. This Picture is not revolutionary. I am not surprised you should think it so; I thought so once myself. But a veil has been lifted from my eyes, and I have reversed my judgment. I tell you that this is the portrait of a Conservative—a man who wants above all things to keep the traditions of His country. So far from being an innovator, it is the innovation that He objects to. He is opposed to the foreign elements that have corrupted the faith of His land. He wants to go back—back to the primitive times, back to the first sources, back to the beginnings of the stream. He would restore the *foundations*. He would revive the first spirit of the nation. He would

go further back than Moses. He would sweep away the elements of so-called progress. He would restore the earliest times, the primal faith—the faith of that father Abraham whose religion of joyous hope was an anticipation of His own day.'

So says Paul. And as in the great gallery he is nearest to the Portrait, we shall let him interpret for us to-day. What, then, is this golden era which he says Christ wished to restore? What to the eye of Jesus made the age of Abraham so much more inspiring than the age of Moses? It was that in the age of Abraham the object of human interest was not a holy law, but a holy man. The living patriarch took the place of the written book. Instead of bending over an inscribed page, the clan raised its eyes to the form of a mighty chief in whom it beheld God's representative of all that was good and true. Instead of becoming an audience, men were made spectators. Instead of listening to the reading of abstract rules, they were told to centre their attention on a living man—to study him, to

take their time from him, to imitate him. They were to make him their standard of comparison, to measure their actions by his light, to ask if their deed was such as the God of Abraham would approve. It was a life rather of example than of precept; nay, shall we not prefer to say, it was a life in which the influence of an individual spirit was more powerful than the maxims of a copy-book morality.

Such, according to Paul, was the life to which Jesus would fain lead back His people—the life which lay, not in obedience to a *law*, but in sympathy with a *man*. But where was the man to be found? Abraham was dead; and if he were alive, he would be no longer available. He had been the representative of holiness only to a primitive race; he could not pass through the fiery furnace of modern criticism. Who *could* pass through that furnace? Was not the whole world lying in wickedness, dead in trespasses and in sin? Where from that corrupt mass could there rise a life worthy to draw the eyes of all the tribes of Israel? Could a bitter fountain bring forth

sweet waters? could death generate life? Where was the man whom the developed conscience of the nation could pronounce holy? Must not the verdict of the united land be, with ever-accumulating conviction, the verdict given by one of her minstrel bards, 'There is none righteous, no, not one'?

It was true; therefore the nation's hope must lie, not in the dead masses, but in the living God. There was no place for her Hero in the ordinary course of the stream; therefore God must somewhere *turn* the stream. The coming man of holiness must be a man sent, a man anointed; he must be a 'Messiah.' A long heredity of physical strength might produce a great warrior; but a long heredity of sin could only bring a great sinner. God must somewhere *intervene* in the heredity. He must add to the river of time a breath from the ocean of eternity—a breath which should accelerate the movement of the waters, and send a current of purity through their turbid flow.

What was to be the test of the coming of this man? What was to be the evidence that

the Messiah had appeared? There could be no absolute evidence till His life had closed. The Holy One of God could only prove His holiness by living pure from morn to eve. No man could stand upon the hill of youth and say with certainty, 'I am the Messiah.' What did the 'Messiah' mean? It was one who should serve God from sunrise to sunset. It was one who should give up his will from dawn to twilight, from birth to death. He could not say 'I am the Messiah,' till he could say 'It is finished.' He might get through the morning; he might conquer the meridian sun; he might even prevail over the afternoon—and yet he might sink beneath the shadows of twilight. The last hour alone could seal his mission, could justify his claim. He must be content to begin with a trial, with a hope, with a prayer. He must be content to feel the aspiration to serve his Father, to atone to his Father for the long dearth of human love. The starting-point of any such life must be the desire to make up, to recompense, to restore, to offer the Father a com-

pensation which all the Jewish sacrifices had failed to give—the surrender of a life of spotless obedience.

From the human point of view, was it open for any one to try? I think it was. 'What!' you say, 'have you forgotten that the choice of the Messiah was limited to the family of David?' No, I have not forgotten that. But I think if I had been a native of Palestine in its later age, I should have been quite unable to tell whether I had or had not any link with the family of David. That family had become blended with the masses; no man could certainly say that he had no kinship with it. Nay, had not that family, according to Jewish tradition itself, originally *sprung* from the masses—from the sons of daily toil? Was not David taken from the flock and from the fold? It was not without reason that to the mind of Israel the first appearance of the Son of David was associated with shepherds keeping watch in the nightly fields. The branches of the Davidic tree were of all branches the most wide-spreading and the most hard to

trace.[1] The family had risen from the people, and to the people it had returned. One might apply to it the words which a poet of Israel spoke of another subject, 'Who shall declare its generation?' Who could say, 'I am precluded from trying the Messianic life by the knowledge that the Messiah must be of the seed of David'? The seed of David was thrown broadcast over every field, and no man could be sure that he had not a share in its possession.

Jesus said, '*I* will try to be this Holy Child of God.'[2] I do not think He said, 'I belong to the family of David; therefore I have a call.' Others around Him might claim, might really possess, the same distinction. I believe

[1] You will observe that in Isaiah xi. 1 and 10, collateral branches seem to be allowed a claim, for the descent was to be reckoned, not from David, but from his father, Jesse. According to this reckoning, *all* descendants of Jesse might aspire to a Messianic birthright.

[2] It may seem that the portentous circumstances of Christ's birth necessitate His definite knowledge of Messiahship from the beginning. But I understand St. Luke ii. 19 to mean that Mary, for the sake of the human development of Jesus, *concealed* the portentous circumstances of His birth; she 'kept all these things *in her heart*.'

His impulse came purely from within. I think He began by saying to Himself something like this: 'How little return the Father has got from His creation during all these years! Men have been offering Him the lives of victims that were *unconscious* of being offered. Surely that can be no atonement for the voluntary separation of the soul! How is it that in all these ages no man has tried to give Him the surrender of his own will? It has been open, at least, to every man to try. Yet I have looked round on every side, and have not found one effort towards voluntary sacrifice. If the Father could get one single soul to serve Him from dawn to dark, I believe that soul would be His Messiah. I believe this one life, offered without spot to the Father, offered from childhood to death in unbroken obedience, would be to Him the justification of all the treasures lavished on humanity. He would feel that it was worth while to have said, "Let us make man"; the whiteness of the one pure soul would atone for the lovelessness of the past, and light the world with

prospective glory. *I* will make this trial—for the sake of the Father, for the love of the Father. I will try by the devotion of one child to make up for the disobedience of all the other children. I will begin to-day—as myself a child in years. I will stand in the temple of His universe, and inquire reverently His will. I will have no plan; I will follow where He leads me. I will go where He points the way—to life or to death; my life shall itself be a dying in Him.'

You will observe that this was a far more aspiring aim on the part of Jesus than if He had founded a claim on His descent from David. Indeed, I think this is a point on which Christians of every age have been apt to err. We divide the life of Jesus into two states—a state of humiliation and a state of exaltation; and we apply the former term to His mission of sacrifice. Now, if I were asked to put my hand on the most *aspiring* effort of the life of Jesus, I should point to that moment in which He attempted the valley of sacrifice. Christians habitually refer to His *miracles* as

the sign of His *divinity*, to His *cross* as the sign of His *humanity*. To me, the attempt to bear the cross is quite the most *regal* feature, the most ambitious feature, in the Portrait of Jesus. No claim to Davidic descent, no claim to physical power, no claim to wonder-working, no claim even to personal resurrection, can for a moment touch the magnitude of conscious greatness implied in offering Himself as a compensation for the sins of the world. The writer to the Hebrews says He offered Himself as one 'without spot.' He could only do so on the *ground* of that spotlessness, or in the hope that He might attain it. The man who should serve God from dawn to dark would indeed be a spotless soul. To *try* such a service was an aim before which the dreams of a Napoleon grow pale. No son of the Roman Empire in its proudest moments had ever attempted anything so high. Amid a nation which, of all others, had the deepest sense of human sin, amid a people which, through its consciousness of guilt, feared to take the Divine name into its lips, a man arose and said, '*I* will try to

live the perfect life'—it is the most dramatic incident on the stage of time!

SON of Man, Thou art never so kingly to me as in Thy priesthood, never so regal as in Thy sacrifice. Thy deepest miracle is Thy mission. Thou hast aspired to be the Lamb of God—the spotless soul. In a world where not one thought is absolutely pure, Thou hast essayed to live, from morn to eve, a life without a stain. Thou hast offered to the Father one cloudless day, one sky of unbroken blue. There is no aspiration so bold in all the ages as this effort of Thine. We tremble to see Thee go forth. We hold our breath at the marvel of the spectacle. We watch Thy progress with palpitating hearts. The desire of our souls will go with Thee. Our interest will accompany Thee. Our sympathies will follow Thee. We shall long to meet Thee victorious at the setting of the sun.

CHAPTER IV

HOW WAS JESUS TO REALISE HIS MISSION?

THE aspect of Jesus in the great gallery is one of deep thought. We are apt to figure it as one of pure pathos or of tragic sentiment. It is a mistake so to fancy it. The Portrait of Jesus has for its deepest expression a weight of thoughtful care. It could not be otherwise. He has arrived at a momentous resolve. He has determined to make the Messianic experiment. Does the word 'experiment' offend you? Do you remind me that His life was all along decreed by Heaven? Doubtless; but Heaven allowed Him to grow into the *knowledge* of that decree. He was the chosen One of God; but He was chosen *within the veil*; no whisper of the choice transpired. The thought broke upon Him from within His own heart—broke upon Him as a problem, as a possibility

as a thing to be tried. And therefore it broke upon Him as a care. His human consciousness was not behind the scenes to read the counsels of the Eternal. If Job had known the prologue to his own book, it would have spoiled the drama; for it would have removed the sense of personal responsibility to tell him that the result was decreed in heaven. Even so with Jesus. His life was doubtless arranged in a prologue, but the prologue was concealed. He was left to work out the problem for Himself—to think of it, to dream of it. Therefore it came to Him as a care, an anxiety. He was to follow where God led; but that involved the search for an open door. Where was He to begin? What was the nearest way? Was it His duty to *select* the nearest way? He was not seeking His own glory, but God's glory; what was the shortest path to the glory of God?

And now, as Jesus stands upon the threshold of His mission, let us stand beside Him. Let us try to look at the scene with His eyes—to see it as it floated before Him in that old world.

Three possible roads are before Him—three possible ways in which He may try to realise His mission. Looking back in an after-time, He called them ways of temptation; but they did not present themselves in that light then. Indeed, the main attraction of each of them is just its seeming Godwardness—its conformity to the Jewish Scriptures. What are these roads? If I were allowed to express myself in a single phrase I should call them respectively, the Democratic Way, the Imperial Way, and the Ecclesiastical Way; and, with the third Evangelist, I see them presented in this order. Let us look at each in turn.

First there comes to Him a cry from the *people*, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' He says to His inner self: 'What better proof of Messiahship could there be than to offer myself as a physical reformer! Are not the multitude crying for bread in the wilderness and finding nothing but stones! Why not try to transform the wilderness—to make the stones bread! Would not this be a service to my Father!

Does not my Father love to be called the helper of the poor! Is not this path of social amelioration a direct, a very near avenue to the Messianic goal!'

But then from within the soul of Jesus there comes another voice, and it speaks in contradiction to the first. It says: 'Would this be an adequate service to your Father? Is the relation of your Father to the world simply that of breadgiver? Does man live by bread alone? does man live by bread mainly? Is it not the wish of your Father to be loved for Himself, to be reverenced for His holiness? There are deeper needs in the heart of humanity than the want of bread; there are deeper joys in the heart of the Father than the *satisfaction* of the want of bread. You cannot give the Father a partial offering. The shortness of the avenue may be tempting, but it falls short in perfection also. It is too meagre, too inadequate a goal. Not by *this* road can you establish the kingdom of God.'

And so, this first vision fades from the sight of Jesus. Presently there rises another. A

second road opens before Him; a new possibility appears. The dream of democracy has given place to the dream of imperialism. Before Him floats in fancy the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and a voice says, 'If you are the Messiah, they are yours.' Would it not be possible to serve the Father by establishing a kingdom of outward force? Would it not be a shorter way to the goal than the purely inward path? Why not begin as a literal king? Why not approach the people as Moses approached them—from the mount—enacting a law of righteousness, and enforcing obedience to the Divine commands?

Was there ground for such a hope on the part of Jesus? He Himself declares that there was. Looking back to this moment from an after-day, and in the light of calm reflection, He says, 'Think ye that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' I think He had in His mind the *Roman* legions. Nor am I sure that the throne of the Cæsars would have been unfriendly to the establishment in

Judea of a reign of Messianic righteousness. Judea had given such trouble to the Empire that Rome might well have hailed the appointment of a peaceful king. But she would have hailed it only on one condition — that the Messianic king should in temporal things be the *vassal* of Cæsar.

Will Jesus accept that condition? Looking at the suggestion afterwards, it seemed to Him nothing less than a solicitation of Satan to worship him. But for the present the import of that suggestion appears divine. Was it not a quick way to holiness?—are not men swayed from the mountains rather than from the valleys! Were not the Gentiles to come to the Messiah's light, and kings to the brightness of His rising? Why not throw Himself into the political arena? Why not utilise Cæsar for the glory of God?

And then another voice speaks within Him: 'Would *this* be using Cæsar for the glory of God? Would it not be subordinating God to Cæsar? Why speak of being a vassal in *temporal* things? Is there *anything* temporal?

Is not the earth the Lord's, and the fulness thereof? Shall the kingdom of God on earth pay tribute to a power which is *not* the kingdom of God? Should not Rome be a vassal of the Messiah rather than the Messiah a vassal of Rome? Is not the man of the spirit entitled to rule all things? You cannot give Cæsar the reverence of the body, and God the reverence of the soul; for the mandate to all ages is this, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."'

And so the second vision fades from the eyes of Jesus. The political road cannot, any more than the social road, be the way to the glory of the Father. By and by there opens a third vision, distinct from either of these. It is a road neither through the people nor through the empire, but through the priesthood. Could the favour of the Father not be won by a great *sacrifice*? Jesus stands in imagination on the pinnacle of the temple, and feels Himself to be the Priest of the Most High. He sees in fancy the crowds below, eager for a divine manifestation. He says to Himself: 'If I could really

place myself in this position, might I not at a bound achieve the Messianic goal? If I were to stand as the High Priest of the Father on the pinnacle of the temple, might I not say to the crowd below, "I am about to make a sacrifice for you all. I am about to cast myself down from this pinacle, to throw myself unreservedly into the arms of the Father. If He will, He can save me. Let my fate this day be the sign whether He does or does not accept me as His Messiah. I peril my case upon the issue. Be ye the judges of my election to be the Expiation for the sins of the world"?'

Then to the soul of Jesus there comes another, an inner voice; and it speaks in answer to the first. It says: 'This act of devotion will not do. It would be an attempt to test your own power of sacrifice. True sacrifice must be unconscious of itself, must deny its own existence. Love never measures the height from which it leaps; it undervalues that height. It does not feel that it has done a great thing, a test thing. This that you would offer is but a priestly offering after all—a sacrifice conscious

of its costliness, a gift presented as a proof of being holy.'

So, from the eyes of Jesus the three visions fade one by one. What has been the defect of them all? It has been one and the same—the starting from a design to prove Messiahship. 'If thou be the Son of God' is the initial note of these temptations. To project any course of holiness with a view to establish a Messianic mission would be itself to *defeat* that mission. Holiness, to be holiness, must be spontaneous. The Messiah was to be the Perfect Life offered up to the Father; but He must not offer that life in order to *be* the Messiah. Imagine Jesus, walking along the shores of Galilee and seeing a paralytic by the wayside, saying to Himself, 'The Messiah was to be one who should heal distress; I will heal this man.' Would not the healing be robbed of half its glory? It would not be an act of spontaneous love—love that could not help it. It would be an act of calculation—calculation doubtless for the glory of God, but still calculation. A young girl once said to me, 'I intend to make an effort to live

for others.' I thought it was a laudable, but not a very hopeful beginning; the intention and the effort were both against its success. Perfect love must be a passion-flower. It must spring spontaneously. It must operate unconsciously. It must be a compulsion of the *spirit*.

And so, if Jesus would be the Messiah, He must begin by forgetting His Messiahship. His first act must be an act of self-emptying. He must forget everything but the love of God and man. He must remember only the long years of unrequitedness which the Father has experienced from His creatures, and the long years of pain which the creatures have reaped apart from the Father. He must lay aside for a time the thought of His Messiahship; He must substitute in His heart the name 'Son of Man' for the name 'Son of God.' There must be nothing official in His sympathy. When He sees distress in any form, He must heal it because it *is* distress—not because the Messiah was *predicted* to heal it. The leper must touch Him by his leprosy, the pauper by his poverty, the invalid by his sickness. The virtue that

goes out of Him must go out of Him—I use His own simile—as the water goes out of a well-spring. It must be gushing, spontaneous. It must be dictated by no outside motive. It must be an immediate response to the call of His heart. Therefore, for a time, the Messianic mission must take the background in His consciousness. The human, not the divine, must be the dominating power; a *man* must be 'a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.'

AND so, O Christ, Thy keynote was self-forgetfulness. I understand now what Paul meant by the saying, 'He emptied Himself'; Thou couldst only become 'Messiah' by *spontaneous* virtue. Thy first work was to lay aside Thy crown—the *thought* of Thy crown. The thought of Thy crown would have spoiled Thy purity. It would have made Thee say in the presence of the paralytic, 'I must heal this man to keep up my dignity.' Not from Thy conscious dignity must Thy hand of healing

come. It must come from Thine own pain, from the bleeding of Thy wounded heart. The robe of official duty would have impeded the *road* to Thy heart. Therefore, early in the morning, that robe was removed. Thy vesture was concealed; Thy crown was covered. 'To be the Messiah' was not Thy primal motive; it was 'to compensate the Father,' 'to succour the creature.' It was love that disrobed Thee. It was pity that uncrowned Thee. It was the pathos of human pain that made Thee forget the wreath upon Thy brow. Thy power of self-forgetting is the opening ray of all Thy glory.

CHAPTER V

THE FORERUNNER

SIDE by side with Jesus in the great gallery there stands another portrait called 'The Forerunner.' It is a most suggestive picture. It has always seemed to me a representation of the dawn as distinguished from either the night or the day. John the Baptist is depicted as the forerunner of the Messiah—not necessarily of Jesus, but of the Messiah whoever he may be. As such, he is described in a mediating attitude between the old and the new. He has his hands upon two worlds—the world that has passed and the world that is to come. One arm is stretched back to yesterday; the other is stretched forward to grasp the approaching morrow. And in his face there is something of the old and something of the new. It is partly the face of Elijah, and partly the face of Jesus. On

the threshold of a revolution there are always attempts at compromise. The night is admitted to be too dark; yet the daylight is dreaded. As a middle course between them *electric* light is proposed. So is it in this portrait of the Forerunner. It is the picture of a man of compromise — a man hovering between the old faith and the new. I say 'hovering,' not 'wavering.' There is no vacillation in the countenance; it is the face of a man who has made up his mind. None the less it is a man who has made up his mind on a course of mediation. He has refused to *rest* in the past; he has refused to *break* with the past; he has insisted on finding a common ground between. He stands in the midst of the desert, and declares that he has found it. Not inappropriately is a desert his home. He is like Israel in its transition age. Egypt is past; Canaan is not yet come. The old is faded; the new has not been assimilated. He has left the land of bondage; he has not reached the Promised Land.

Let us examine these two opposite attitudes

of the portrait before us. As we have said, one arm is stretched towards the new, the other backward towards the old. Let us begin with the former—the *progressive* attitude of the man. He is not altogether a son of the past. He is said to have come in the spirit and power of *Elijah.* Yes; but it is the *fourth* power of Elijah. You remember how over that prophet there swept four successive influences—the thunder, the earthquake, the fire, and the still small voice. In the spirit of the Baptist it is the *last* of them that lingers. To him as to Elijah the heavens are opened; but it is not to let *in* a chariot of fire, but to let *out* a dove upon the earth. The symbol of war has been supplanted by the symbol of peace. There is a strong touch of resemblance between the Messianic ideal of the Baptist and the Messianic ideal of Jesus. There is one point of resemblance so remarkable, so different from what we should have expected, and yet so conformable to what we should desire, that I should like here to give it special emphasis.

I allude to the test proposed by the Baptist for the recognition of the Messiah. You remember I expressed my opinion in a previous chapter that the mission of Jesus was not originally suggested by His connection with the House of David—that it was suggested by the desire to be 'the Holy One of God.' Did you ever think how singularly the Baptist's test of the Messiah corresponds to this view? We should have expected him to say, 'If you want to know which of you is most likely to be the Christ, search the genealogies.' Does he say that? On the contrary, he proposes a test of *righteousness*. He declares that he himself was guided in his search for the Messiah by one consideration alone — the evidence of holiness. I knew him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.'

Now, is not this strikingly suggestive? Here is a man living at the time when the

Messiah was expected in a scion of the House of David. He himself shares the common expectation. Yet to him it is a subordinate question whether that descent can be proved. He is willing to accept the descent from David as a matter of *faith*, provided he can see something else as a matter of *fact*. What is that other thing for which he demands a direct, an immediate scrutiny? It is the standard of Messianic holiness. The testimony of the genealogies is nothing to the testimony of the *Spirit*. 'Do you see,' asks the Baptist, 'a man who claims the Messianic office? Test his claim by his *goodness*. Leave in abeyance any external test—whether miracle or pedigree. Consider only the extent, the intensity, the abidingness of his virtue. Weigh his pretensions to be the Holy One. Mark his claim to be the Lamb of God. Estimate his moral right to be the Atonement for the sins of the world. Inquire whether his garment is without blemish and without spot. Examine whether the light of the Father can detect

a stain in him. Thus alone shall you find an answer to the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"'

And I take this to be the reason why the Baptist's first message to the world is, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' In the light of the foregoing view it is a highly logical message. If the credentials of the Messiah were to be the proof of the genealogies, I see no ground for repentance; a bad man can examine documents as carefully as a good man. But if the credentials of the Messiah are to be his virtues, I can understand very well the preliminary call to purity. Who can test holiness but the good? Who can see God but the pure in heart? If the claims of the Messiah are to be tried, it must surely be by an intelligent jury. Where shall we find an intelligence fitted to give its verdict upon the possession of holiness? Intellect will not give a right to sit at such a trial. Artistic culture will not give a right to sit at such a trial. Nothing will confer such a right but the possession of a kindred

spirit—the spirit of that harmless dove which was to be the sign of the Son of Man.

To this extent, then, the Baptist is a new man—a man of the future. But let us pass to the second attitude of the picture. If one arm is stretched toward the world to come, the other is encircling the world of yesterday. This man is not really emancipated from the past. His ideal of the Christ is not identical with the Portrait in our gallery. It is sufficiently different to show that he was not the *artist* of that Portrait. The same dove-like purity is on the face of Jesus as shone on the face conceived by the desert preacher; but there are two features in the latter which are absent from the former—an impatience of all delay, and an intolerance of all imperfection. Let us glance at each of these.

The face depicted by the Baptist has an element of impatience in it. He describes the Messiah with his winnowing fan 'in his hand' —ready to be used. There is to be no dallying, no delay. The process of renovation is to be immediate. No man is to be allowed

a season of pondering. Whosoever will, may enter into the kingdom; but he must enter now or never. Heaven is to be taken by violence — by an instantaneous rush. The decision is to be like the decision on Mount Carmel—rapid, unhesitating, fearless. There is to be no time for waiting, no place for doubt. Every cloud of the human heart is commanded to vanish at the rising of the sun.

Do we find this feature in the Portrait of *Jesus*? No, but the opposite. We have no need to reason on this matter. We have His own express opinion on the subject. What is His parable of the barren fig-tree but a direct statement of the contrary view? He hears borne upon the air the cry of that drastic crowd who have been impregnated with the spirit of the Baptist, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' It is assumed by this crowd that to be sterile now is to be sterile for ever. Jesus says: 'No; you do not know the possibilities of environment. Improve its surroundings, and you will in-

crease its chances. Do not lay the axe *yet* to the root of the tree. Give it time; give *me* time. Wait till I have digged round about it; wait till I have tried its susceptibilities. It may be that its barrenness is an accident. It may be that wider room and brighter exposure will fertilise the germ. The tree which yields nothing in the wilderness may become the Tree of Life when "in the midst of the Paradise of God."'

The second feature in which the face conceived by the Baptist differs from the actual Portrait of our gallery is the intolerance of imperfection. He expects from his Messiah a drastic separation of the wheat from the tares: 'He shall thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' No wonder at an after-day the Baptist doubted if Jesus had actually fulfilled his ideal! For this is not a feature of that Portrait of the Messiah which hangs in our gallery. It is a distinctive element of the teaching of Jesus that in the formation of

His field the wheat is to be accepted *along with* the tares: 'Let both grow together until the harvest.' Can any one fail to detect the profound wisdom of such advice? How much of our badness is the exaggeration of something which in itself is useful! You may cure a bad temper by plucking out the temper altogether. Many a boy has been rescued from wayward impulses by a cure worse than the disease—has been reduced by stern training to the attitude of a lifelong weakling, to the position of a poor, timid, vacillating creature, incapable of self-decision and unfit for independent action. Unskilful reaping has in the moral sphere done more harm than injudicious planting. Therefore we greatly esteem the method of Jesus. He prepares a table for the soul in the presence of its enemies. He does not insist upon purity as a *preliminary* condition. He demands nothing but aspiration. He invites men to come *in their sins.* Other masters demand *cleansing* before we enter their temple. The Brahman demands it; the Parsee demands it; the Jew

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himself demands it. But Jesus demands it not. He bids us come in with our stains, with our burdens, with our impure garments. He invites the blind, the deaf, the lame, the leper, the spiritually poor who are conscious of their rags, to enter, just as they are, into the presence of the King of kings.

Is not this the meaning of the answer which Jesus Himself makes to the disciples of the doubting Baptist, 'Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them'? It is as if He had said: '*Your* method is different from mine. You wish to gather into the kingdom the sighted, the nimble-footed, the cleansed. *I* wish to gather those who *need* these qualities. The temple I construct is a temple for the consciously *un*holy. The table I spread is a table in the desert. The feast I prepare is a feast for the famished. Tell John that the vision of the tares is essential to my

kingdom. They who enter the holy precincts must beat upon their breasts and say "Unclean!"'

THOU Man of Nazareth, be *Thou* my forerunner. The Baptist is no longer in advance of me; I am now in advance of him. *Thy* light has made his light grow pale. I cannot accept his terms of salvation; they are too severe. Sinful man is ever too severe upon his brother. All that ever came before Thee demanded from me more than I could give; they bade me robe in white ere I entered the audience-chamber. But Thou hast bid me come unrobed. Thou hast offered me admittance in my dusty garb, in my raiment stained with the burdens of the day. Thou hast invited me without the ring on the hand, without the shoes on the feet. Thou hast left the beautifying for an after-hour; Thou hast let me in without one plea. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven has been the most accessible of all. None but Thee had the words

of Eternal Life for a heart *uncleansed.* They all kept their diamonds for the pure; Thou alone hadst a ring for the prodigal child. Be *Thou* my forerunner; I can follow none but Thee.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLAN OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

YOU will remember that I said Jesus had no plan. Nor had He; but His *life* had, that is to say, His Father had. There is no individual life without a plan of development. This is true on any interpretation of nature which we choose to adopt; it is true of the system of theism; it is true of the system of evolution. It is a very different question whether the individual life is *conscious* of its plan. I should say, never. I should think such a consciousness would destroy development itself on the part of the individual; it would make the life complete from the beginning. I believe that the individual man has in many cases a prophecy of his *mission*. The poet may have a presentiment of poetic greatness; the reformer may have the sense of an incumbent duty. But the very

glory of such presentiments is the absence of detail. Their brightness originates in the fact that they shine in the dark. They have to keep their light through difficulty, through obstacle, through seeming denial. They do not create their circumstances; they are often *counteracted* by their circumstances. They reach their highest triumph when they can preserve their conviction through *suffering*.

Jesus had the sense of a mission—an ever-growing sense. At first, as I have said, I think it was tentative. It broke upon Him in a voice which whispered 'Try.' Whether that voice came in the unrecorded years, whether it first spoke to Him as a child musing in the temple, whether it flashed out its message through the hammers in the workshop of Nazareth, I cannot tell. But I am told that He 'grew in knowledge,' and I think it must have been Messianic knowledge. If so, then His sense of a Messianic mission must have been revealed, as one of His disciples says, 'from faith to faith.' It must have ascended from peak to peak in certainty. It must have

been a veritable Pilgrim's Progress in which the conviction climbed from dawn to day—rose from an aspiration to a hope, from a hope to a faith, from a faith to a forecast, until it culminated in a height of full realisation.

The mission of Jesus, then, began with an aspiration—a yearning to be the Holy One of God. It was essential to that yearning that, so far as Jesus was concerned, it should have no plan. His very proposal was the negation of a plan; it was the effort to yield His own life to the life of the Father. Such a surrender demanded the relinquishing of personal foresight. It necessitated the abandonment of any individual scheme. It was the determination to follow exclusively the will of the Father—whatever it might be, wherever it might lead. He felt that if He were the Messiah He had 'a baptism to be baptized with.' But the essence of this baptism was its original indefiniteness. It was the command to wait upon the Divine Will, to follow that Will without inquiring what it would bring. It prescribed the attitude, not of the far-seeing

politician, but of the common soldier—of the man who refuses to map out the course of his own march, who waits upon the orders of another, and obeys these orders on the judgment of another. The Messianic mission was essentially a surrender of the will; and a surrender of the will implies the giving up of any personal plan.

But it is a very different matter when we look at the life of Jesus retrospectively. There we stand at the top of the hill, and gaze downward from a luminous exposure. We see the end before the beginning. We see that this life of Jesus was not an accidental life—that the way by which it travelled was an ordered way. That is a highly significant scene which is depicted on the road to Emmaus. Jesus is then at the top of the hill. He is looking down upon His life from a vantage-ground. He sees the six days of incompleteness from the height of the seventh morning. While He was passing through these six days there were many things which straitened Him,

some things at which He marvelled; there were even times in which He had felt as if His mission had been a failure. But from the top of the hill the whole landscape of the past was changed. The path so obscure in its prospect, so tortuous in its experience, became luminous and straight in its retrospective view; and the suffering from which He had momentarily recoiled appeared a thing essential to the entrance into His glory.

We, then, of later times can see something in Jesus which was not revealed to His first disciples—not originally revealed to Himself. What is that? It is the plan of the Father. We who stand on the road to Emmaus have the privilege of looking back to the lower and surmounted ground, and of seeing that the lower was the avenue to the higher. What, then, is this plan of the life of Jesus? Volumes have been written on what is called 'the plan of salvation'; but it is not this we are here in search of. It is something more simple and more within the range of history—the plan of a *life*. We want to know what is that

order of development revealed in the earthly path of Jesus. Let us ask what view was taken by the age immediately succeeding His own—that age in which to the eyes of men the Original was replaced by the Portrait. Let us take the man whom we have already introduced as the figure standing nearest to the Picture—the man Paul. He has never seen the Original; his eyes have only rested on the Portrait. But of that Portrait he has had a front view—the foremost view. I do not think even the first disciples had such a view. You may read more in a man's portrait than your neighbour does in the *man*. Paul read in the *Picture* of Jesus what neither Matthew nor Mark detected in the *Original*. To Matthew He is the fulfilment of a prophecy; to Mark He is the Man who spake and it was done; to Paul He is from dawn to dark the Man of sacrifice.

Paul is the first who attempts a spiritual philosophy of the life of Jesus, the first who draws a plan of His human development. Very striking, very original is that plan.

You will find it in a passage to which I have already incidentally alluded. The words are familiar—too familiar. We lose in their repeated sound the sight of their deep meaning, of their abiding freshness. I quote them in full: 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though in the form of God, thought equality with God a thing not to be snatched at, but emptied Himself, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being recognised in the fashion of a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'

This is Paul's philosophy of the life of Jesus. What *is* it? It is the description of a ladder of descent. You observe that it goes systematically from the top to the bottom. It begins by delineating the height, and it ends by depicting the vale. Every step of the ladder of Jesus is described as a step downwards. We see Him first 'in the form of God'—in the enjoyment of the Divine communion. Then comes the first *interruption* to the communion.

It is a thought—the thought of those who share not the privilege. This thought will not let Him rest satisfied with a personal communion; He will not snatch it for Himself alone. He puts Himself in the place of those outside; He begins by doing so in *thought*. He empties Himself, in *imagination*, of His own beatific vision—tries to conceive what life would be without it. Then He passes from imagination into act. Step by step He comes down. He takes the servant's form—lofty yet subordinate. He comes down lower—to the likeness of ordinary men; He participates in common experience. He descends farther still; He loses His first fame; He is recognised only 'in the fashion of a man.' He stoops still lower; He 'humbles Himself'—gives up His first ideal of an immediate kingdom. Then comes the schooling of His mind to a more dismal ideal; He becomes 'obedient unto death.' At last the foot of the ladder is reached in the most repulsive form of death—the form which separated the ordinary man from the despised man—the death of the cross.

Of course I do not mean in my studies of the Portrait of Jesus to follow these steps of Paul's ladder explicitly. That would reduce the work to a piece of mechanism. I want to look at the experience of Jesus, not as I see it now, but as He felt it then. I shall therefore abstain from formal or explicit insertion of the life into a completed framework. I should like its sequence to be arranged, not by me, nor even by Paul, but by itself. None the less am I convinced that this sequence will be found to follow, if not the steps, at least the principle, described by the man nearest to the Portrait. I cannot withhold my admiration for his philosophy of the life of Jesus—the earliest ever attempted by the mind of man; and I feel that, whatever be said of the details, to all time the *principle* will stand. I feel that the life of Jesus has actually described this course. I feel that its progress has been a descending progress—from the hill to the plain, from the plain to the valley. Each step has been a step in sacrifice. Each circle has been a lower circle. I would add that on this

very ground it has been a *wider* circle. Not without reason is it said that Jesus won His empire by stooping. Humanity is like a mathematical triangle; it is widest at its base. We all meet in the valley. We do not all meet on the height; we do not all meet on the plain; but in the valley we are made one. Had Jesus stopped on the high eminence of a merely angelic mission He would have had merely an angel's audience. But when He stood in the valley of death, He touched that chord of nature which makes the world akin. Apparently in His descent of Paul's ladder He was doing everything to bury Himself; but I can understand the logic of the apostle's bold paradox, 'Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name.'

O THOU who art painted, not only in the gallery of the world, but in the gallery of my heart, help me to follow Thee. Inspire me with Thy power to descend the ladder of

human experience. Let me come after Thee in the downward steps of sacrifice. Deeper and deeper let me wend my way toward the valley where the millions meet. Help me, not only to believe in Thy name, but to believe in the way by which Thou hast *made* Thy name. Reveal to me the power of self-forgetfulness. Teach me that the burial of self is the road to resurrection. Let me learn that only in sympathy with the lowest can I have sympathy with all mankind. Give me communion with the vale that I may have fellowship with the mountain and the plain. I shall only attain Thy crown when I have reached Thy cross.

CHAPTER VII

THE COUNTERPARTS OF THE THREE TEMPTATIONS

JESUS began His mission in the hill-country. He did so not only in a geographical, but in a metaphorical sense. We have seen what are called His three temptations. They all originated in a state of mental elevation. They were suggestions to become Messiah by a stroke of power. Three courses, as we have seen, presented themselves to the soul of Jesus. He might take the platform of the social reformer —make the stones bread. He might assume the crown of a potentate—receive the kingdoms and the glory of them. He might invest Himself with the sacrificial prerogative of the priest—cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. The people, the throne, or the altar—these had been His alternatives. But

to these three there had been one thing in common. They all indicated on the part of Jesus a condition of spiritual exaltation. He had taken the form of a servant, but as yet He was only sweeping the *upper* rooms. The depth of the descent was still veiled from Him. His first vision had been, like all the visions of youth, a sight of the glory without the perspective. The roads presented to Him were all short roads. They were such roads as Elijah would have contemplated, as the Baptist would have contemplated. They promised to usher in the kingdom in a moment of time. They were attractive from their seeming directness. They appeared to lead right to the Metropolis, to the City of God, to the establishment of that great Theocracy for which men had been waiting so longingly and so long.

And we have seen how Jesus Himself put His hand upon the weak point in these temptations. We have seen how there came to Him the conviction that each of the three courses was vitiated by having for its motive the proof of His Messiahship. The goals were

all good. To help the people was good; to purify the state was good; to sacrifice at the altar was good. But to do these things because the Messiah when He came was *expected* to do them, this was to make virtue a mechanical thing. Jesus felt that the welfare of the people must be sought for the sake of the people, that the purity of the state must be desired for the sake of the state, that the act of priestly sacrifice must be deemed precious for the sake of Divine and human love. The three courses were all legitimate to Jesus. He might play the part either of the generous bread-winner, the just king, or the holy priest. But He must play any or all of these parts, not on the ground of being the Messiah, but on the ground of being a man. He must be drawn to them by human sympathy, by human equity, by human piety; and the Messianic glory must be reached, not as a voluntary motive, but only as an unconscious result.

And now I come to a point which has always struck me as very remarkable. As we emerge from the scene of the temptation into the

earliest active scenes of the life of Jesus, I am arrested by a striking fact. The first three of these active scenes are repetitions, in a sanctified form, of the three visions described in the temptation. Remember these three visions—the generous bread-winner, the king at the head of the legions, the priest sacrificing himself at the altar. Keeping these in view, take the narrative which in point of time immediately follows—that embraced in the second and third chapters of St. John's Gospel. You will, I think, be struck by the similarity between the three scenes of the temptation and the three first episodes of the public ministry of Jesus. Let us stand again in the great gallery, and consider the Portrait before us. We have contemplated the *meditative* aspect of the features; but there is energy beneath the calm. We have seen His spirit in deep thought, pondering how His mission was to be realised. We are now about to cross the line which divides His hour of meditation from His hour of resolution. He has rejected in *spirit* the solicitations of the tempter. He has

refused on the *tempter's* terms to be the bread-winner, the king, or the priest. But He is ready to be each and all of them on His own. As He emerges from the desert into the light of day, the first *acts* of the day are refrains of the desert. Jesus treads again the scenes of the temptation. He enters the three spheres which the tempter had indicated. He claims them; He appropriates them; He makes them His own—but not in the tempter's way. He finds a new way, a better way of becoming the bread-winner, the king, and the priest.

Let us see how each of the first three scenes of the public ministry of Jesus is a counterpart of one of those which flitted before Him in the solitudes of the desert. In these solitudes the first solicitation to His heart had been, 'Prove your mission by making the stones bread.' When He comes out from the solitude He is met on the very threshold by the *counterpart* of that solicitation—'Make the water wine.' It is the same kind of work He is asked to do—a work of transubstantiation—the change

of common into precious material. But what He had refused to try as a proof of His *Messiahship* He attempts for the sake of *humanity*; He does at the marriage feast what He would not do in the desert. This is what I understand by the words of the fourth Evangelist, 'This beginning of miracles did Jesus in *Cana of Galilee*.' The tempter had wanted this beginning of miracles to be made in Judea—in the depths of the wilderness. Jesus claims another scene for the work of transubstantiation. He selects, not the solitude but the crowd, not the lonely desert but the place of human concourse. Why? Because to take His suggestion from the desert would not have been to take it from the actual contact with human want. It would have been a purely official act, a Messianic act. But at the marriage feast it is far otherwise. Here, he stands on human sympathy alone. Here, there is nothing official, nothing Messianic. It is apparently a trivial occasion. That is the beauty of it. It brings out an accidental play of the essential unselfishness of Jesus. Its

importance grows out of its insignificance. Let us ponder how.

When Jesus comes to that marriage feast He is full of Messianic thoughts. He is fresh from the wilderness—fresh from the inward struggle regarding the *way* to His mission. On that mission He is intent. It is the subject of all His meditations; it stirs His waking hours, it colours His dreams. Suddenly there arises one of those family incidents which are supposed to be at the opposite remove from solemnity—the festive celebration of a wedding. Jesus is there as a guest—doubtless for reasons of consanguinity. We cannot think that He went without a sacrifice; His original desires must have been elsewhere. But these desires are surprised and taken captive. Something occurs to retard the family joy; a deficiency arises in the physical provision for the feast. At first His mind is somewhat far away; He is thinking of the *greater* salvation; He says, 'Mine hour is not yet come.' But at last the *little* hour eclipses for a time the great one. A trivial human

need diverts Him for a moment from the main road—surprises Him, so to speak, out of His Messianic consciousness. *Human* sympathy rules supreme, rules alone. It is sympathy with a secular want, with a physical want, with a transient want. Everything in the picture is grouped and fashioned so as to emphasise and intensify the fact that the first public work of Jesus was prompted by humanity alone. It was something out of His previous line, on the junction of a new line. It was the beginning of that divesting of His own consciousness which was to be the star of all His future progress, and the goal of all His future glory.

I come now to the second counterpart of the temptations in the wilderness. The second of these temptations was that of empire. It practically amounted to this, 'All these kingdoms of the world will I give thee if thou wilt rule as men rule—by physical force.' This He had refused to do. Yet the temptation was the travesty of a *real* empire—an empire to which He was heir. As He emerges into the world there meets Him that reality of which

the temptation was a semblance. It meets Him, not in Galilee, but in Judea. We are no longer at the marriage feast. We are under the dome of night, in the City of David. Jesus for the first time stands before us in the attitude of a lawgiver. A ruler of the synagogue has bent his knee to Him, nay, has bent the knee to Him on the ground of something like *physical* power: 'Master, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him.'

Here is something very near the suggestion of the wilderness. Nicodemus presents to Jesus an image of His power very similar to that which the tempter had presented. Jesus cannot receive the latter any more than He could receive the earlier suggestion. But now along with the travesty there bursts upon Him the reality. He sees that there *is* an empire for Him. He sees that there *is* a force of which He may be the centre—a force more potent than the physical, more abiding than the material—a force which when once communi-

cated must be all-compelling. To Nicodemus He proclaims the *condition* on which He can be a king, asserts the only principle of His possible sovereignty—the suasion of the spirit. He tells him that a man cannot see His kingdom by seeing any wonders He may do, that to feel the force of His sceptre he must be born of His Spirit. Those who follow the banner of the Messiah must not be driven. They must be like 'the wind blowing where it listeth.' They must have a sense of perfect freedom. They must do His will, not merely because it *is* His will, but because it has become their own. Their obedience to Him must be the obedience of a kindred nature, of a faith resulting from similitude, of a love arising from common sympathies. Such is the empire that floats before the vision of Jesus; such is the kingdom which replaces in His mind the throne He had refused in the temptations of the wilderness.

But there is a third counterpart. The desert temptation had made its last assault upon the side nearest to His heart—His spirit of sacrifice.

It had assailed him in the capacity of the priest. It had called upon Him to prove His devotion to the Father by a public surrender of His life into the hands of the Almighty: 'Cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the temple.' Jesus had refused on the ground that sacrifice was not good unless it *brought* good. But when He has come out from the solitude He is met by the *real* demand for sacrifice. As He treads in reality those temple courts which He had paced in imagination, there rise before Him the impurities to which the house of God was subjected. He sees men buying and selling within the sacred precincts, and His soul is stirred with indignation. He feels Himself to be *indeed* on the pinnacle of the temple—to be the High Priest of the Father. Will He suffer this desecration? Is it not His province to interfere, to confront this unholy merchandise, to overthrow the tables of the money-changers, to drive out the oxen with a scourge of cords? To do so will be practically to follow the advice of the desert—to cast Himself *down* from the pinnacle. It will be exposure to obloquy, danger, violence,

perhaps death. But it is no longer the same death as the *desert* proposed. That was for the sake of pain; this is for the sake of purity. That was to prove His piety; this is to make others pious. That was for a test of fortitude; this is for the benefit of mankind. There breaks upon the human soul of Jesus the true goal of sacrifice. The desert ideal vanishes, to appear no more; and in its room there rises a new ideal in which the thorn is only accepted for the sake of the flower. Henceforth, if called to endure the cross, He can only endure it 'for the joy that is set before Him.'

SON of Man, let my goal, like Thine, be not the night but the star. Let me reject with Thee the desert ideal. Let me learn with Thee that pain for its own sake is *not* the will of my Father. Teach me Thine own experience that, where the will of the Father points to the thorny way, it is only because *flowers* lie farther on. If I am called to sacrifice, let it be to cleanse Thy temple. Let me feel that my

sorrow is helping somebody, smoothing the path of somebody. If I take the road to the poverty of the manger, let me see the treasures which thither I bear. If I keep watch in the dark night, let me hear with the shepherds the angels' song. If I have to bathe in the waters of Jordan, let me behold overhead the opened heavens. All sacrifice will be possible for me if I know it to be a ministry of love. I shall bear Thy cross when I have the joy that was set before Thee.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WEARINESS AT THE WELL

HITHERTO Jesus has been on the heights. Alike in vision and in action His experience has been that of the mountains. His mission has at first presented only the aspect of a ruler. He has stood on the top of the hill and surveyed the kingdoms; He has stood on the pinnacle of the temple and surveyed the multitude. He has manifested His power at Cana; He has given the law to Nicodemus; He has cleansed the courts of the Father's House. Doubtless he has taken the form of a servant, but as yet it is that of a higher servant; the deeper steps of His humiliation are still to come.

But these steps are now to be taken. Hitherto He has entered mainly into sympathy with the *Father*; He has now to descend

into sympathy with *man*. Is there any biographical link between the stage on which He is standing and the stage to which He is going? I say 'any *biographical* link.' I am not speaking of philosophy or theology. What we want to know is whether in the records of the actual life of Jesus there can be traced any point of transition between the period of His Divine, and the period of His distinctively human service. There is a great difference between girding one's self to serve the Father and girding one's self to serve the creature. The very sense of sonship in the soul of Jesus made the service of the Father an easy thing; there was a sympathetic relation *already* existing here. But between the human soul of Jesus and the creature the relation of sympathy had yet to be made. The very height of His purity was in the first instance *adverse* to His sympathy with man. To attempt the salvation of man for the glory of the *Father* was a natural, a spontaneous act; but to seek the salvation of man through a kindred feeling for the *creature* was a thing

which required time. The kindred feeling had first to be *established*. Where in the record shall we seek the beginning of its development? Where shall we find the narrow line of junction which connects the ministration on the mountain with the ministration on the plain and in the valley?

Now, it is my opinion that in the chronological sequence of the narrative such a point is to be found. I shall place it at Samaria —in the course of that journey which Jesus took from Judea into Galilee. The historian quaintly says that to make the journey 'He must needs go through Samaria' — meaning that it was a geographical necessity.[1] Yet there is a deep *spiritual* sense in which the words are equally true. The name of Galilee has become proverbial as the place of human weakness and spiritual destitution. Jesus was going to Galilee—no longer as a mere home of earthly relatives, but as a sphere to be conquered for His Father. Was it not well

[1] The route through Samaria was the shortest way from Judea into Galilee.

that ere He touched this sphere of human waywardness there should intervene something to bind Him to the soul of man? Was it not well that He whose lot it was to grow into human experience should, before entering the scene of deepest degeneracy, acquire a touch of the feeling of our infirmities?

But why is the scene in Samaria this preparatory moment? Where within this narrative lies the transition-point between Judea and Galilee — between the contact with the higher ten and the contact with the lower thousand? At first sight it seems as if the journey to Samaria contributed less to Christ's mission than any other incident of the Gospel. There is no record of a miracle — beyond a penetration into the secrets of a life. There is no record of a large conversion, of an extensive movement of religious revival. There is certainly a full presentiment of Jesus that He was the destined One; but, as we have seen, He never wished this presentiment to be the basis of His action. *Where*, then, lies the significance of Samaria as a preparation for

human sympathy? Is it that He came into contact with a people even more despised by Judea than the men of Galilee? But He came into that contact by a geographical necessity, not yet by a deliberate choice. All along the line of the narrative there would seem to be no place for the human development of Jesus.

But the place lies just where we should never have looked for it—in a little corner to which the expositor is often blind. In our inquiries about the significance of this narrative our eyes are on the wrong track. We are ever asking what Jesus gave to *Samaria*; has it ever occurred to us to ask what Samaria gave to *Jesus*? There is one incident in this narrative which is unique, and which, being unique, must be significant. Hitherto, Jesus has appeared before us in the attitude of a king; here He comes before us in the attitude of a suppliant. For the first time in the record He *asks* for something. At the marriage feast of Cana He had been the distributor; at the well of Samaria He is the one in want. He has come to that well footsore and weary.

Physical fatigue has overmastered Him. Unable to proceed farther, He has sent His disciples to procure bread in the neighbouring village. Solitary and exhausted, He awaits their return. A woman of the district comes to draw water; Jesus says, 'Give me to drink.' His first approach to Samaria is in the attitude not of a ruler, but of a dependant. Instead of saying, as He could have said, 'You have need of *me*,' He introduces Himself with the bold assertion, 'I have need of *you*.' It is indeed pre-eminently bold—the very audacity of humbleness. Even an ordinary Jew would have died ere he had made such a request of a Samaritan; how could it be made by one who had pretensions to be the Messiah!

There are some who would answer the question thus: Jesus was thinking of the water of life. He wanted to lead up to the subject. How could He better lead up to it than by a metaphor—the metaphor actually supplied by the scene before Him! The woman had come to draw the literal water; He was able to give her living water. How better introduce His

power than by manifesting an interest in her work, and how better manifest such an interest than by expressing a desire to be recipient of her labours!

Now, all this is too dramatic for me. It is conceived no doubt in a spirit of deep reverence; it is meant to exalt our perception of the Portrait. But to my mind it fails in its intention. To me the exaltation of Jesus must ever lie in His spontaneity. To make Him express a physical want with the object of suggesting a spiritual subject is in my view mechanical and therefore *un*spiritual. I hold that Jesus asked water because He wanted it. Any other solution of the problem is weak and misleading. Nor does it to me enhance the reverence for Jesus to say that in every little act of His earthly pilgrimage He is working out the plan of a mosaic. A plan there certainly is, but it is as yet in the hands of the Father alone. Jesus is following the stream of events, in other words, the prompting of the hour. There is to my mind a ring of autobiography in His saying, 'Take no thought

for to-morrow.' It was an echo of the time when He walked by the day. His journey to Samaria is a walking by the day. It is constrained by geographical necessity; it is impeded by physical weariness; it is pursued in bodily want; it culminated by asking a favour at the hands of one who had need to be redeemed, 'Give me to drink.'

It will be more reverent, then, to inquire, What was the plan of the *Father*? Let us leave Jesus in the possession of His spontaneity. Let us say that the want is a real want. Let us admit the change of attitude between the Man who turned the water into wine at Cana and the Man who asked water at the well of Jacob. Let us concede that the prayer came from really suppliant lips and is to be explained as the cry of any other suppliant. It will still remain to ask if this moment of want has any place in the plan of the Father. Jesus is walking by the day; but the Father is not. Jesus is moving spontaneously; but the Father is not. To the Father belongs the real mosaic, the true development of the life of Jesus. Is

there a place in that mosaic for a moment so humiliating? We see a place for the wilderness, a place for Cana, a place for Nicodemus, a place for the cleansing of the temple; in all these attitudes Christ stands before us as a king. But at the well of Jacob He is a man—a weary, lonely, wayfaring man—not the benefactor but the benefited, not the donor but the suppliant, not the pitying but the pitied. He has reversed the promise of His opening mission. At Cana He gives; at Samaria He gets. Has the Father a place for the weariness at the well?

He has; nowhere is the chain of development more thoroughly riveted than here. Without this episode of humiliation we should lose the key to all that is to follow. Remember *what* is to follow. It is Galilee—the meeting with man as man. It is no longer with man on the heights that Jesus is about to deal. It is with human nature itself—human nature on the plain. The wilderness had not revealed that; Cana had not revealed that; the night-meeting with Nicodemus had not revealed that. His experiences, Judean and

Galilean alike, had been experiences of the mountain; He is now on His road to the plain.

Now, could there be a better preparation for this distinctively human sympathy than the experience of human want? Remember that all the future miracles of Jesus are miracles of sympathy. They are not dramatic scenes planned for a purpose. They are spontaneous outpourings of His heart coming forth because He cannot help it; this is the feature about them with which the Father is well pleased. But if these miracles are to be the product of His sympathy, they must be the product of His sense of want. There can be no helpful sympathy where the want is not common to the benefactor and the beneficiary. If you tell me a sad story about the fairies, I shall probably shed no tears. The reason of the dry eyes will not be that the story is untrue; we shed most tears over untrue stories. The cause will lie in the fact that Fairyland is *foreign* land, that the wants supposed to be there experienced are not the wants felt by me. Every sympathy is a memory. I feel for you

what at one time I felt for myself. The remembrance of my personal want is the measure of my sympathetic power. If I feed a destitute crowd in Galilee, it is because I have myself experienced destitution at the well of Jacob.

Jesus is no exception. He too must have His human sympathy lighted at the fire of personal pain. A very old writer, a writer contemporaneous with our oldest Gospel, says, 'He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.' Obedience to what? To the law of human sympathy. It is no peculiar case in Jesus. What the writer wants to emphasise is that He became subject to the law of *our* being; he says in effect, 'Read Him in this instance by *yourselves*.' It is not possible that sympathy for my brother man can precede my personal experience. All my compassions are echoes —echoes of the strains of sorrow I have heard in my own ear; omit the strain, and you remove the echo. That is the law of humanity; and the Son of Man became obedient to that law. To Him as to me a personal link was inevitable on the road to human sympathy. To Him as to me the passage from Judea to

Galilee could only be made by a transition through Samaria—a transition in which the individual, personal life was called to experience a wellspring which was dry, and had to rest its weariness upon another human soul.

O THOU, who hast become partaker of my experience, make me partaker of Thine. Thou couldst not sympathise with me without living *my* life; I cannot sympathise with Thee without living *Thine*. There are sorrows of Thine which are mysteries to me, because I have not lived them. I marvel still before the gates of Thy Gethsemane. It is because sin has not pained me as it pained *Thee*. If I had Thy horror of sin I would watch with Thee in the garden; it is want of personal *memory* that makes me sleep. I cannot come into Thy Galilee until I have passed through Thy Samaria. I have not felt Thy Divine hunger, Thy Divine thirst, Thy Divine weariness. I shall blend my griefs with Thine when I have experienced Thy waiting at the well.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST RESULT OF SAMARIA

AND now Jesus is back in Nazareth—the home of His youth. He gives a curious reason for going back—'a prophet has no honour in his own country.' One would have thought this a reason for keeping away. But consider where He had been in the interval—in the metropolis. He had stood in the centre of Jewish life, in the place where the ways met. His presence had made a mark; His influence had been felt in high quarters; He had received the imprimatur of the capital. Looking at the matter in this light, do you not see the force of His reason for going to Nazareth? We might put it into words like these: 'I may go back *now* to my own city, for I have no longer the *atmosphere* of my own city. As long as I had no recognition elsewhere I had

no recognition there. But now I have been recognised by the metropolis. Jerusalem has seen me, listened to me. Little Nazareth will not refuse after that. It will not any more look upon me merely as the home prophet. It will receive me, not on the ground of being a countryman, but on the ground that I have transcended my country, that I have been impregnated with another air, that I have obtained my credentials from a higher city—the City of David.'

It is this feeling which prompts Jesus at last, though late, to preach in Nazareth. We should have expected it would have received His first sermon. Yet His human heart knew right well that those in whose vicinity a man has lived and grown are not the most receptive of his teaching. 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not,' are words which bear, to my mind, the echo of unappreciated years. They tell of an influence rendered powerless by the familiarity of home, of a beauty shrouded by nearness, of a greatness hid by the constancy of daily contact. The

men of Nazareth could not believe in the coming distinction of the name of Jesus. Did they not live in the same environment? Did they not walk the same streets with Him? Did they not pass Him in the market-place? Did they not know His mother and sisters perfectly? What should make *Him* so far above *them*? Was it possible that two should be grinding at the same mill, and that the one should be lifted up while the other was left behind? If Jesus would speak to the men of Nazareth, the proximity must first be broken; it was expedient for them that He should go away. But, having gone away, having made the beginnings of a name, having caught the air of the metropolis, having washed out the reproach of living next door to His pupils, it was equally expedient that He should return. The postponed sermon to His own kindred could be preached by a voice from the capital. He felt, and rightly felt, that the Galilean multitude could only be addressed from a mountain; in the recognition by Judea that mountain was found.

But whatever Judea had done for the coming sermon, Samaria had done more. Judea had removed a prejudice; but Samaria had lifted a barrier. If Judea placed Him socially on the mountain, Samaria put Him spiritually on the plain. The weariness at the well was a deeper preparation for His sermon than the prestige acquired at the cleansing of the temple. The prestige gave Him an audience; the weariness gave Him a contact with the heart. Indeed, I think the coming sermon at Nazareth is the true sequel of Samaria. I should not like to have seen it placed earlier in the picture; it would have destroyed the fitness of things; it would have jarred on our sense of harmony. Standing where it does, it stands in the right place, the only place suited to it. It marks a stage in the human development of Jesus. It is not itself a development; it is the record that a development has taken place elsewhere. It reveals that something has occurred to unseal a well in the heart of Jesus, and it points back to that other well in Samaria

where He first vividly experienced 'the days of His flesh.'

The keynote of the sermon of Nazareth is human sympathy; it is struck at the beginning, it is maintained to the close. The discourse has at once a retrospective and a prospective value; it points back to Samaria, and it points forward to His coming ministry. It is therefore a distinctive landmark between His past and His future. It vindicates the well of Samaria; it indicates the lines on which He is to move through Galilee. Such a milestone in the march well merits a moment's pause. Let us glance at one or two features of this remarkable sermon. There are no original heads in it; they are professedly borrowed from a Jewish prophet. The originality lies in the application of the words by Jesus to Himself; that is the real subject of discourse; that is the light in which it demands our attention. I believe the Messianic convictions of Jesus came at first in intermittent flashes, such as those by which the sky often re-establishes itself after cloud and storm, and which still

enclose cloud and storm between them. This sermon is one of these flashes—clear, piercing, illuminative; it shows the road behind; it reveals the way before: 'To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."'

Now, I should not have expected Jesus at this early stage to have selected *these* as the signs of His coming kingdom. I say 'at this early stage.' I can understand very well how the deepening *shadows* should have brought out these special colours; I can understand how the death on *Calvary* should have given them a permanent glow. But to the eyes of them who trusted Him there was as yet no trace of shadow; to the Messianic hope of the age there was no place for death. It was to the *heavens* that men were looking for a sign

of the Son of Man. They expected the first coming to have all the attributes which Christians now attach to the second; they looked for it 'as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west.' Over against this lurid picture, what a homely scene breaks upon their view! Jesus sketches the ideal He had formed of His own glory, of His Father's glory. Everything about the sketch is simple, unadorned, even rustic. The *Prophet* might well have appropriated it as descriptive of his own humble mission; but it must have seemed *beneath* Jesus. To preach the Gospel to the poor, to proclaim deliverance to the captive, to wish the world a good New Year, to comfort the broken-hearted, to heal such insignificant things as bruises of the spirit—this seemed an unpretentious programme. What had prompted Jesus to adopt it as His own? The cleansing of the temple appeared worthy of Him; what had intervened to make Him stoop from His sphere?

It was Samaria; it was the waiting at the well. Nazareth is the sequel of those hours of

weariness. In stepping from the well of Jacob He had stepped deeper into humanity—had become more 'manifest in the flesh.' Incarnation is not an act; it is a process; it goes from less to more. Samaria was a step of the incarnation of Jesus; it sent Him deeper down into that which was universal in human nature. The empire which was the converse of that scene in the wilderness began to glimmer before Him. It was a field harder to be conquered than any which Cæsar had won—a field sown with tares, strewn with ruins, thick with unsightly swamps. He had learned its want by His own hunger, its weakness by His own need.

And what is that programme which Jesus here prescribes for His future? It is something altogether new—something which the Jewish Prophet had, indeed, recognised as *God's will*, but which no nation and no faith had yet decreed as *man's practice*. It is a series of rules for the survival of the *un*fittest. It has been said that Christianity is a progressive religion; to me its distinctive feature is its *re*gressiveness. It is the only religion which

goes back to gather up the lost things—the things which have fallen by the way and have been left behind. Jesus claims as His own prerogative that He came 'to seek and to save that which was *lost*.' His distinctive glory is regressiveness. He alone goes back to the forest of humanity to seek the children that had lost their way. China goes back; but it is not to seek wandered children: it is to prove a primæval glory. Judea sometimes goes back; but it is to seek, not the Garden of Gethsemane, but the Garden of Eden. All the rest are professedly pressing forward—Brahman, Buddhist, Parsee, Greek, Roman. All their messages are for strong souls—souls already on the road to Elysium, already on the road to Nirvana. Jesus alone has a message for the weak. Jesus alone retraces His steps into the already traversed forest. He treads a winepress in which He is unaccompanied by any professing saviour—the way of those who are ready to perish.

There is another feature in the programme which is well worth considering. The first desire of Jesus in relation to man must always

have been his *spiritual* emancipation—'to preach deliverance to the captive and recovery of sight to the blind.' And yet, the first in order of importance is not to Him the first in order of time. I do not know that the *Prophet* attached any significance to the order of the clauses; I am quite sure *Jesus* did, for He followed it in His ministrations. To Him the earliest of all missions is the healing of the broken heart. One would have thought the *spiritual* teaching would have taken the precedence in point of time. Jesus knew better. He knew that no spiritual teaching has any effect at a shut door. He knew that if the heart is depressed by its own bitterness the most precious thought will fail to move. How often has the finest sermon fallen flat on the ear because the spirit was broken! What is a broken spirit? It is what a broken limb is, what a broken wing is—a thing deprived of the power of motion. If the *mind* cannot move, the chief workman is wanting. In vain you 'preach deliverance to the captive and recovery of sight to the blind'; the broken heart could

not lift itself into a level with the message. You must begin, not with a message, but with a fact. You must seek to bind the wound of the spirit, to heal the breakage of the heart. You must roll the stone from the door of the sepulchre if you would bring the Christ from within.

Accordingly, the method of Jesus is to start with the cure. He adopts it here in theory; He maintains it throughout in practice. Christianity is before all things a medical movement. It aims to reach the soul—but its first inquiries are about the health. Nowhere is it more modern than here. The systems of the past, as a rule, have been of the East Eastern. They have counselled the mutilating of the flesh; they have proclaimed the redemptive to be the opposite of the medical. Christianity is of the East but not Eastern. It has been transplanted into the West because it has the *spirit* of the West. It has recognised from the outset the doctrine which *we* claim as distinctively modern—the physical basis of life. It has recognised the connection between soul and

body. It has recognised that he who would bear a message to the soul must not ignore a preliminary condition—an inquiry into the physical constitution of the man. It has pointed to the fact that the evangelist has often failed simply because the physician has failed. It has anticipated the modern verdict that the schoolmaster is not enough, that the preacher is not enough, that the reformer is not enough —that a healing hand must first be laid on life's bruises, and a healing voice must say, 'Arise and walk.' Christianity has claimed as man's method what the Psalmist accepted as God's —that the first step in the restoring of the soul is to make it lie down in green pastures, to lead it beside quiet waters.

THOU who knowest what is in man, guide me into the path of human charity. I often begin at the wrong end. I bring the tract to the hungry, the sermon to the thirsty, the creed to the weary. I forget that the broken heart is a motionless heart, an irrespon-

sive heart. Teach me the meaning of these words, 'Thou hast set my feet in a large room.' Teach me the power of the environment. Teach me that the grapes of Eshcol have something to do with the march through the desert. Help me to remember the elevating power of fair surroundings. Enable me, before all things, to say, 'Be of good cheer.' Let me bring my message, Thy message, upon the wings of mercy. Let me learn the spiritual force of secular comfort. Reveal to me that the resurrection of the body has a part in the redemption of the soul. *So* shall I practise Thy gift of healing.

CHAPTER X

THE SECOND RESULT OF SAMARIA

I HAVE said in the previous chapter that the end contemplated in the sermon of Nazareth is the survival of the unfittest. As yet, however, it is only the burden of a *sermon*; it has all to be translated into the life. Here, as elsewhere, the step of the Son of Man into the lower humanity begins not in act but in thought. As the meditation of the wilderness preceded the miracle of Cana and the cleansing of the temple courts, so is the meditation at Nazareth the prelude to a deeper and darker descent into the life of the human soul. For the first time as a missionary enterprise, there has flashed before the eyes of Jesus a vision of the conquest of Galilee. Men had often spoken of its conquest from the power of *Rome*. Jesus dreamed of

a mightier deliverance—of what one of His followers called a deliverance 'from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.' The voice which He heard in Samaria had summoned Him into Galilee.

But remember, in becoming an idea, Galilee had become a type. It had ceased to be a mere geographical province; you have only to read the conclusion of the sermon of Nazareth to see how completely Jesus had emancipated Himself from the limits of geography. Galilee had become to Him what Bohemia is to us — a name to mark the reckless section of humanity. It had become to Him a synonym for all in the world who needed help, for the whole family of the labouring and the heavy-laden, for those whom despair of recognition had rendered lawless. The higher life of different cities may vary; but the lower life of all is very much alike. My sympathy with the upper ranks in one place does not imply my sympathy with the upper ranks in another;

but my pity for the lower ranks in one place *does* imply my pity for the lower ranks in another. When Jesus took up Galilee into His heart He took up all Galilees. He entered into sympathy with all distress in every locality. He became pledged and bound to regard the soil of all poverty as His own native soil.

And, singularly enough, the first public manifestation of the plan conceived at Nazareth occurred, not in the literal province of Galilee, but in the course of another visit to the capital. The time of the Passover had come, and the tribes of God went up to the sacred city, Jesus joined the multitude. He never dreamed of founding a new religion—neither then nor afterwards. To Him the faith of the Jewish race was the bud which enclosed all possible flowers. Therefore He joined the multitude on the road to the great religious festival of His nation. When next the curtain rises He is beside a second well. At the well of Samaria He was alone; at the well of Bethesda He is surrounded by a crowd of

sufferers in search of health from the mineral waters. From out that crowd His eye rests on *one*. Why does the one engross His interest? All are suffering from the same kind of ailment; why does His attention centre on a unit in the thousand? Surely there must have been some element in the fate of this one man which made him a special object of interest in the eyes of Jesus! Is there anything peculiar in his case, anything in which he differs from the crowd? If we find this peculiarity we shall reach at the same time the secret of Christ's attraction.

The peculiarity of this one man is not the fact that he is lame; others around him are in the same condition. It is not the fact that he is personally impotent; many at his side are in like case. It is the fact that he is impotent all round — personally and impersonally. He has neither limbs nor friends. Others are equally impotent in body, but they have some one to help them down into the pool. This man is at all points disarmed

for the struggle of life. He has not one single weapon with which to defend himself. He has neither self-support nor brotherly support. He is in the arena, not only without weapons, but without hands. Numerous as is the crowd of sufferers, there is one class of the unfortunate which has no other type but him, which without him would be unrepresented—the men who are unfit for the battle.

Now, remember where Jesus has come from. He is fresh from the sermon of Nazareth. Remember what was the burden of that sermon. It was the survival of the unfittest. Put the two facts together and see if they do not harmonise. Is not the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda the very embodiment of that idea which dominated the sermon of Nazareth? It is the first practical effect of that sermon, and therefore the second result of Samaria's well. It is the inauguration of a principle new in the world's development. That development had always proceeded on the lines of the survival of the strongest and

the sending of the weakest to the wall. At the pool of Bethesda the waters of human sympathy were stirred, and the spirit of man became troubled by the claims of the weakest. It was the advent of a new force into humanity —a force which entered into collision with the old, and never paused until it had transformed the world.

In these studies I am only selecting the facts that bear on the human development of Jesus. This is one of these. It is the first healing act He performed on the lines of the sermon of Nazareth. He had found that His special work for man was to promote the survival of the unfittest—to set at liberty them that are bound. Here is a representative of the class—one whose case may stand as a specimen of all. He attracts Jesus mainly by his unfitness for life's struggle—his unfitness even for the ordinary modes of cure. He presents disqualifications which were as yet unique in the human experience of Jesus. Neither the men of Cana's feast nor the inmates of the cleansed temple

nor the nobleman's son whose cure is recorded in Luke iv. revealed this element of unfitness. The man is not only bruised in body but bruised in heart. The impotent limb is almost the least of it. Byron tells us that the prisoner of Chillon had been so long in bondage that when at last deliverance to the captive was proclaimed he left his dungeon with regret. This man's position would have been similar. I have said that the broken heart is the motionless heart. It is not enough to put the watch to the right hour if the spring has snapped; you must first restore the spring. The spring of the watch is the heart; the broken heart is not necessarily restored by the restoration of an impotent limb.

Accordingly, Jesus employs here the method prescribed at Nazareth. He begins by asking a seemingly useless question, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' What makes it seem useless is the fact that we attribute to this impotent man our own healthy condition. Jesus knows better. He sees him listless, apathetic, taking

as a matter of course that he is unfit to urvive. He desires to awaken the dormant ish for something better. Before all things, Ie would move the *heart* of the man. revious to creating for him the heavens nd the earth He would have the spirit to ove on the face of the waters. Therefore Ie begins by asking, 'Would you not like o be as other people — active, unimpeded, ble to enjoy the delights of life?' It is question which no man would like to put ho believed cure to be hopeless, but which very man is entitled to put who aspires to ffect a cure.

For this leads me to a principle which is eeply imbedded in the healing acts of Jesus. allude to the fact that in the cure of human Istress He habitually asks the co-operation f the patient. Sometimes He appeals to the ith; here He appeals to the desire: in either se the principle is the same. And what is e reason of the principle? It is because esus wants the survival of the unfittest to be e *transformation* of the unfittest. He does

not want unfitness itself to survive; that would be to Him the least desirable of all evolutions. The aim of Christianity is to have the deformed *trans*formed. It is not simply to preserve the weak; it is to annihilate their weakness, to make them dominant forces in the kingdom of God. Accordingly, the first appeal of Jesus is to the secret of all human force—the will. 'Wilt thou be healed?'—it is a declaration on the part of Jesus that in *His* system of salvation man is not to be passive. The salvations of the past had been commonly of another kind. The human soul had been a mere instrument played on by a foreign hand; its will had been absorbed, its affections suppressed. But the kingdom of God was to be opposed to asceticism. It was to seek, not the contraction, but the expansion of the soul. Its keynote was to be reciprocity—man working *together* with God. It was to desire an increase, not a diminution, of human personality. It was to demand as a preliminary condition the co-operation of the heart of man.

One of the finest illustrations of this principle to be found, I think, in words used by Jesus Himself, 'If ye abide in me and my words bide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and shall be done unto you.' You will observe the demand for a *reciprocal* relation; we must bide in *Him* and He must abide in *us*. Brahmanism would have been content with the former; it was satisfied that the human should be lost in the Divine. Jesus would have deemed this no victory. To Him the highest power of salvation is what Ezekiel calls the saving of a soul 'alive.' A soul might be saved by death—taken away from the evil to come. A soul might be saved by sleep—have its passions deadened by narcotics. These are not a conquest, but an annihilation, of the will. But to be saved *alive* is to preserve my personality in the process. It is to come forth from the baptism not deadened but quickened, not mutilated but enlarged, not circumscribed but glorified. It is to reveal the truth that surrender to God is *not* absorption in the Divine, and that the human

will is never so strong as when it has yielded to the power of love.

THOU Divine Man, I thank thee that Thou hast desired the response of my heart. I thank Thee that there is something in me which is not quite impotent—something which Thou hast deemed worthy to work along with Thee. I have no strength with which to serve Thee; but Thou hast accepted a service *less* than strength—the *will* to be strong. While yet I am impotent of *limb* Thou hast asked the movement of my *heart*, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' Let me yield Thee this one gift in my power—the *willingness* to be. I cannot yet toil with Thee; let me wish with Thee. Let me figure in fancy what I would do for Thee if I were free. Let me imagine how I would serve Thee if I were lifted from the porch of Bethesda. Let me plan the race I would have run if I had been strong in limb. Let me picture with longing that road of beneficence which weakness has

rbidden me to follow. Let me paint in my eart those labours of love which the body ould not bear. And Thou shalt *accept* the eart. Thou shalt receive the desire in place f the deed. Thou shalt pluck the flower in ne absence of the fruit. Thou shalt write the book of Thy remembrance that I *wish* o be made whole.

CHAPTER XI

THE LEAGUE OF PITY

WHEN Jesus healed the lame man of Bethesda the saddest part of the spectacle remained to Him uncleansed. The saddest part of the spectacle was the fact that in a world of human hearts a man of physical impotence should be deemed unfit to survive. The cure was but the lifting of one pebble from a sea of troubles. At all Bethesdas and in all Galilees the same weird story was being repeated. The man who did not happen to move in the direction of the stream was left behind to die. To Jesus this current of the stream was the real calamity. The thing above all others to be deplored was man's inhumanity to man. The cure of the cripple was a satisfaction; but it did not by one iota remove the fact that he had been left to lie in the porch for want of a friend's strong arm.

Accordingly, the eye and mind of Jesus were ccupied with a deeper problem than the orld's pain—the world's sin. The conviction f the world's sin did not come to Him as n abstraction; it was wakened by concrete xperiences. If you believe in His human evelopment—and the evangelical history bids ou—you will believe there must have been time in which the conviction of the world's n broke upon Him as a personal experience, time when it became not merely a lesson earned from the Jewish law, but a fact realised the individual life. I think one of its eepest revelations must have been the scene t Bethesda. It was not a scene of absolute nhumanity; men *were* engaged in helpfulness. ut each helped only his own. The spectacle as in one sense sadder than one of complete avagery; it was savagery in the sphere of ivilisation. It showed how little the develop- ent of the world had done to root out that rimitive instinct which makes self-preservation redominant. It revealed the limits of human ve even in its own sphere and under the most

favourable conditions. Jesus felt that what the world wanted was moral renovation. To clear away calamity would be simply to remove the need of unselfishness. His aim was to preserve that need; what He deplored was that men were not conscious of it. To abolish the cross would be moral suicide; men must be taught to *take up* the cross, to reproduce His experience, to follow *Him*.

Here is something unique in human history. An individual life, burning with the desire to right the wrong, stands in the centre of the world's market-place and cries, 'Follow me.' Observe where the uniqueness lies. It is not in the fact that Jesus seeks to attach Himself to the company of others; all youth does that; it is the period when we like least to be alone. But the motto of ordinary youth is 'Let *me* follow *you*.' Its leading feature is imitation. It sets before itself the examples of the past and tries to tread in their footsteps. Jesus is an inversion of the order. Standing on the threshold of active life, with all the kingdoms of the world in front of Him and all

the examples of the past behind Him, He proposes *Himself* as the object of imitation. Like all lives on the threshold, He too desires to associate Himself with others; but He claims to be the leader, not the follower. Instead of constructing a guild on the basis of some ideal of admiration, He proposes to construct a guild which shall have for its basis the imitation of Himself. Humanly speaking, and speaking with all reverence, I should say that Jesus presents the aspect of a man without an ideal. His only ideal is His Father. To be perfect as His Father in heaven is perfect and *for the sake of* His Father in heaven is the sole end and aim of His being; His meat and His drink is to do the will of His Father. This human life without a human ideal is the most extraordinary spectacle in history. But that this human life should offer itself as an ideal to all other lives, that this man who followed none should invite all to follow Him, is an element that adds to the wonder. Such is the manifestation of Jesus which we are next to see.

I

Shortly after the scene of Bethesda, and with a view to the moral renovation of the world, He begins to form a league of pity. It is to be the nucleus of a great humanitarian guild—a guild which through the years is to grow and ramify—which is to become first the Ecclesia, then the Church, then the Christian State, and eventually the United World. But the point I here wish to emphasise is the condition required for enrolment in this guild. The condition prescribed by Jesus is the consent of the members to take Himself as their model; 'Follow me.' This new league, like other leagues, receives a secret watchword; but by the consent, nay, by the command of its Founder, the watchword is neither 'fraternity' nor 'liberty' nor 'equality'; it is 'the imitation of *Jesus*.'

And this is not the less but all the more remarkable from the fact that the members of that little band which inaugurated the league of pity were not new to Jesus. I gather from the opening chapter of St. John that they had known Him in the days directly preceding

His public ministry, that they had listened to His private teaching, that they had been so impressed with that teaching as to say among themselves, 'Is not this the Christ?' He founded His claim to their confidence upon something earlier than His miracles—upon impressions derived from the domestic life, from the family altar, from the scenes of home. He rested it upon that in Him which was least transcendental, most familiar to the average eye. He neither appealed to Cana nor to Bethesda; He reverted to the memories of a time when as yet the cottage of Nazareth was in the ascendant and the household fires had not been left behind. There is no better proof of the absorbing power of His personality than the fact that the league of pity had its nucleus in men who were drawn to Him ere He had manifested His glory.

The most remarkable feature of this league of pity is the meagre terms required for its first subscription. These fishermen of Galilee were originally united not by a creed but by an ideal—a standard of imitation. What they

subscribed to was not an assent to certain doctrines; it was a promise of certain actions. They began, as they ended, with faith; but the beginning of their faith was not the signing of a confession; it was the expression of a desire to follow Jesus. There is no preliminary command even for the confession of sin. They are not told to begin by interrogating their past—by asking whether they are worthy to follow; they are to come without introspection —as St. Mark puts it, 'straightway.' In nothing is the human wisdom of Jesus more transparent than in this postponing of repentance. Self-introspection requires a light; and the light must come before the searching. How shall a man judge of his want of charity except by first *joining* the league of pity! It is by pity and by pity alone that I learn the *want* of it. Before all things the *light* must come. It is this light which must kindle the fire of my remorse. It is by the burning bush in my desert that I find it to have *been* a desert; previous to that illumination it was my city, my native air. It was only by the

entrance into a ministrant life that such men as Peter and Andrew and James and John could learn their past inadequacy for the kingdom of God.

There is one question which may suggest itself here: Why did Jesus form a human league of pity at all? Why not appeal to that heavenly host which was so prominent a feature of the old dispensation? Was not such a union a league sufficient? With the confidence in His mind that such an alliance existed, why seek so frail a support as the co-operation of a human guild? Now, in all questions of this sort I try, wherever I can, to get the answer from Jesus Himself. I regard all the sayings of Jesus as autobiographical. Every utterance must have been a voice of personal experience, and there must have been a period in His life when that experience began. There is one of these future utterances which seems to me to have originated at this period in the heart of Jesus. It is the remarkable saying, 'The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into *His* hand.' What is

the idea of these words? It is the conception of a transference of the reins of Divine government. I conceive that at this time Jesus said to Himself: 'Hitherto, in the faith of Israel, the Father has given the charge of man to the *angels*. The time has come for a change of thought in this matter. Henceforth, *man* shall have the charge of man. The government of my Father has always been a vicarious government; but hitherto it has devolved upon the angelic throng. Let it now devolve on the human. Why should an *angel* be the best help for an earth-born soul! Has *he* taken the seed of Abraham? Does *he* know the frailty of man's frame? Has his training in the school of sorrow been such as to make *him* a fitting guardian of the weak? Is not *man* the fitting guardian of man? My Father desires to transfer the government. He calls upon the sons of *men* to lift those burdens of humanity which to the eyes of the past generation were laid upon the arms of the cherubim.'

Such I understand to be the real bearing of

the apostolic call. It is the formation of a human brotherhood to take, in relation to man, the place of the angels. Up to this time the beings *outside* humanity had been looked upon as the sole ministers to man. To be fed by mysterious agencies was to be fed providentially. It seemed more reverent to believe that Elijah was ministered to by the ravens than that he was ministered to by the Arabians—either translation being admissible. It was really *less* reverent. *Intelligent* ministration is the most providential ministration. The ravens and the angels are both *removed* from man. They are so from opposite reasons; the ravens are too far below, the angels too far above. Perfect ministration is ministration founded upon a kindred experience. Such can only be found within the circle of the human. Jesus woke the world into that consciousness. He proclaimed that if ministration was to be complete, man must be the angel to man. That is the thought at the root of what is called the Christian ministry. It is the idea that sympathy with human weakness demands

participation in that weakness. In the strength of that conviction Jesus formed the league of pity—a human league, a brotherhood of man with man for the support of man. He initiated a movement in the heart of humanity which, though in its origin no bigger than the eddies of the pool of Bethesda, was destined in the fulness of time to become a very ocean of love.

SON of Man, let *me* join Thy league of pity. Let *me* take the place of the angels in the ministry to human souls. Angels cannot meet the wants of my brother. They could minister to *Thee*, for Thou hadst their nature as well as mine. But my brother has not their nature. He needs some one who knows him ; he needs *me*. Send *me*, O Lord. Let *me* be the apostle to the weak and weary. Send not the cherubim and the seraphim ; send not the angel and the archangel. These have no drooping of the wing ; they are never tired with their flight ; they cannot sympathise with faintness. But *I*

have borne the burden of the day, I have been tried in the furnace of pain. I have trod the dusty plain, I have descended the deep valley, I have climbed the arduous steep. I know the path of the weary, I can guide where the celestials never go; make *me* a helper in Thy ministrant band.

CHAPTER XII

PECULIARITIES OF THE LEAGUE OF PITY

IF one had been asked to predict beforehand what would be the constitution of the league of pity, I think he would have said three things: 'It will have a very large membership'; 'It will select men of tried experience'; 'It will embrace minds of kindred qualities.' Every one of these natural anticipations has been falsified by the fact. The league of pity constituted by Jesus is a conspicuous reversal of these three principles; and as in this respect it partakes of the originality of its Founder, it demands a place in a study of the Portrait of Jesus.

And first. There is apparently a startling disproportion between the aim and the efforts of Jesus. The aim is gigantic; it is nothing less than the moral conquest of the world: 'Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on

a hill cannot be hid.' But where is the *hill*? The eye looks around and sees none. There is nothing elevated in the spectacle before us. There is nothing in the city to excite wonder —except the seeming presumption of its pretensions. It has a population of twelve souls capable of action; the rest are as yet impotent. This insignificant company is to Jesus the beginning of the kingdom of God. It is to this insignificant company that He utters His largest and loudest promises. It is on the work of these twelve that He professedly builds His empire. It is these that He sends forth—I do not say merely into the parliament of earth, but into the parliament of heaven—to represent the cause of humanity before the throne of the Father. We start back, appalled at the boldness of the representation. It is a boldness unparalleled in all religion, unexampled even in literary imagination. We have often been startled to hear the Jewish nation claim to represent all the kingdoms of the earth; but to hear twelve men make that claim surpasses the bounds of wonder.

And yet, in the very heart of this paradox the wisdom of Jesus shines. There is a familiar expression, 'The world is small.' We frequently quote it; but have we considered the truth of it? We popularly understand it to mean that people whom we have once known are likely to meet us again in far-off lands and after many years. In truth it means much more than that. The individual meetings are only symptoms; the real proof of the world's smallness lies below. It lies in the fact that, wherever we go, the types of humanity repeat themselves. Perhaps to a thoroughly travelled man or woman the most abiding experience will be a sense of the essential likeness of human nature everywhere. I believe that the number 'twelve' is not too small to represent before any throne, Divine or human, all the phases of humanity. It is a great mistake to imagine that the village life of Galilee differs in essence from the metropolitan life of Jerusalem. Those who have lived in a village after knowing the town will tell you how struck they have been with the parallel between them. We speak of the

temptations of city life as if they were something distinctive. They are not. The life of the rustic reveals precisely the same temptations as the life of the man of fashion—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and especially, what we should least expect, the pride of life. I have never seen such exhibitions of caste as I have witnessed in the routine of a country village none of whose inhabitants rose above the level of a working man.

When Jesus lit twelve representative moral torches He contributed all the original lights required for the illumination of the world. I say 'all the *original* lights'; other torches had to be kindled from these. But what I mean is that in these twelve He had already provided for all possible phases of humanity. If I want to light a million candles there are two ways in which I may do so. I may strike a million matches and put one to each of them; in this case they are all original lights. Or I may light with one match only twelve candles, bring these into illuminative contact with others, bring these others into contact with a third

class, and so on throughout the series. In this case only the twelve lights are original ; the rest are really derived from them. Now, this latter is the method of Jesus. It appears again and again in word and work—in the parable of the mustard seed, in the simile of the leaven, in the distribution of the desert loaves. Nay, is not this multiplying of little things the root idea of that otherwise obscure sentiment, 'A few are chosen, but the many are called'? The chosen lights are the original lights—those who are kindled by the immediate contact with the match. But the rest have to place themselves in *proximity* to the original lights. Unlike the chosen, they have a choice. They are not illuminated previous to willing it ; they must come into contact with the first light and catch the glow. The kingdom of grace is an economical kingdom ; it has provision for all, but provision without waste. There is no expenditure of superfluous radiance ; the twelve first candles are the light of the world.

I come now to the second peculiarity of the league of pity. We should have expected that

Jesus would have made choice of the most experienced men. A league of pity seems to demand experience; we go instinctively to the aged for comfort. Yet the first league of pity is a guild of young men. Why is this? Of course we all understand and approve the platitude, 'Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.' That is an argument for early tuition. But what we want to know is why the stage of early tuition should be deemed a standard for all time. The mystery is not that Jesus had young men among His disciples; it is that these young men became His prime-ministers. We want to know why Jesus selected for His league of pity men whose experience was yet to make, men who were standing only on the threshold of existence, and who had still to enter that world of which they were declared to be the light.

And the answer is, because the measure of a man is not his experience but his hope. Experience is memory. Earthly memory presents, as a whole, a record of failures. No man guided by that alone will preach the gospel of

moral renovation. The work of moral renovation is proportionate to the amount of hope, and in some measure to the discounting of memory. Hope is apt to predominate in youth; memory, in age. Let us imagine a case in which youth was all hope, and age all memory. A young man, let us say, goes to an old man, and paints the ideal he has conceived of a good time coming. The old man asks, 'What ground have you for this roseate vision?' 'Nothing but hope,' answers the youth. The grave senior shakes his head. 'My lad,' he says, 'when you are as old as I am you will know how all such ideals override experience.' Which is right? The young man—and he is so for the very reason stated by the old. Is not the very overriding of experience a proof that experience is not the measure of us? Is not the fact that man's ideal transcends his reality a suggestion that there awaits him a larger reality? That is what Jesus felt. That is why in forming a league for the moral renovation of humanity He drew its first disciples from the young. Nay, that is why in the centre of these disciples

themselves He placed a little child. It was a symbol of the truth that what He wanted first and foremost was hope—the power that could precede experience, the power that could survive experience, the power that could predict the advent of a new experience. To receive the kingdom of God was to revive the hopefulness of youth.

There is one other peculiarity in this league of pity. The men who compose it do not seem at first sight to have a common basis. As the little company files out before us there appears to be no bond between them. We are disposed to ask on what principle Jesus can have made the selection. First there steps forth Peter Bar-Jona—a man of quick fire and flashing impulse; we say, 'I see the kind of man Jesus wants.' Suddenly there comes up another in every sense his contrast—a man characteristically meditative and slow, proverbially spoken of as tarrying till the Lord comes; it is John son of Zebedee: we feel that we have *limited* the desire of Jesus. By and by there emerges a second pair. There

stands forth a man from rural life, bearing the simplicity of rural life, wondering if good can come out of a gay town; it is Nathanael—certainly, I think, one of the twelve. But he is followed presently by a man of the city—a man with all the shrewdness of the exchange and all the keenness of the counting-house; it is Matthew, the publican. A third pair comes into the arena. We see a red-hot believer eager for martyrdom; it is James the brother of John. And by his side there stands one who through his love is equally ready for martyrdom, but who intellectually believes little; it is Thomas—the man who, when he despaired of the cause of Jesus, was still able to say, 'Let us go that we may die with Him.'

Whence the admission of such diversities? It is to show how varied are the possible forms of love—how many different songs love may sing and still be true. We can verify this for ourselves. There is a love like Peter's whose essence is impulse; there is a love like John's whose power is waiting. There is a love like Nathanael's which lives in sentiment, which

speaks the language of flowers; there is a love like Matthew's which deals in practical service. There is a love like that of James which must have an object to lean on—it is more reverential than protective; and there is a love like that of Thomas which has protectiveness for its brightest glory, which can support its object in the dark hour. All these and a hundred phases more can exist in the kingdom of love. The wedding is furnished with guests, and yet there is room.'

I THANK Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast placed so many lights in the upper chamber—so many and so varied. I thank Thee that I do not need to take my rule from *one*, that each can see his own star in Thy sky. And yet, I thank Thee still more that I do not need to *rest* in my own star. Thou hast ordained many lights, not only to prepare a place for me, but to prepare for me many places. Thou wouldst have me, not merely to keep my own glow, but to get from others the colour

which in me is dim. Thou hast put Peter beside John that the impulsiveness of Peter may be moderated; Thou hast put John beside Peter that the slowness of John may be quickened. Illuminate me by my *brother's* light. Give to my love the quality in which it is *not* strong. Let me catch the impress of the *opposite* star. Let me press toward the gate by which *I* have *not* found Thee, by which my brother *has* found Thee. Help me to sympathise with those who have entered by another door of Thy temple. Reveal to me that my song of praise is not complete till it blends with a counterpart in the great symphony. I shall know the meaning of the many voices when I learn the need of Thy manifold grace.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FIRST CIRCLE OF THE LEAGUE OF PITY

THE history of civilisation has been the history of expanding circles. It begins with the individual; it widens into the family; it expands into the tribe; it unites several tribes to form a nation; it joins many nations to make a brotherhood of Man.

The history of the healing work of Jesus is, I believe, an epitome of that progress. This, too, as we have seen, begins with the individual. It works its first miracle in the impulse of a personal courtesy at the marriage feast of Cana. In the opening days of His ministry Jesus goes forth alone. I do not say He is unaccompanied as a *traveller*, but He is unaccompanied as a missionary. There is as yet no organised band of workers, none to participate in the ministry to man. But

we have seen the first eddy of the pool—we have seen the formation of a league of pity. Jesus has officially associated Himself with other lives. His work has entered on a new beginning. Christianity has become a corporation, a membership. It is as yet a very insignificant membership, but it has vast pretensions—as vast as civilisation itself. It proposes to work them out on the *plan* of civilisation. I believe you will find, when you reach the real order of the events, that the ministry of Jesus follows this plan. You will see it ever widening its circles till it embraces the representation of the world. The league of pity has been started; what will be its first manifestation, its earliest sphere? If it is to follow the plan of civilisation, its first corporative movement will be round the family altar. Is this expectation realised?

It is. In chronological order the first definite event after the formation of the league of pity is the healing of an illness in the family of one of its members; we read that 'Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever,' and that

Jesus was called to minister. I remember in the days of youth what a peculiar impression I had in reading this narrative. It was like the sensation of seeing a balloon drop into a hay-field. There was a savour of anti-climax about it. Here was a league of pity for the help of the world; and at its first manifestation we were confronted with the recital of an act of favour shown to one of its members. It seemed like a bringing down of the bird in the moment of its upward flight. One looked at the outset for a cosmopolitan *act* from a movement with such a cosmopolitan aim. We expected, perhaps, a mission to Rome, at the least an immediate journey to Jerusalem. It came somewhat like a shock to be told that this ministry found its inauguration when 'Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever.'

But a little reflection, like a little knowledge, is a dangerous thing. A deeper reflection dispels the illusion. As we study the Portrait of Jesus it becomes more and more clear that this seeming anti-climax is on the lines of a plan—not the plan of Jesus, but that plan of

the *life* of Jesus which has been evolved by the Father. When the earthly life of Jesus was complete, men woke to this plan. They saw that the course of Christianity was to be a movement from the home centre to the outlying circumference. Why did they see that? Because the life of Jesus was before them, and the life of Jesus had revealed it. Why does He say in His very last charge to His disciples, 'Teach all nations, beginning at *Jerusalem*'? Is it a patriotism or is it a principle? It is a principle. What is that principle? It is this, that the primal need of man is the extension of the family instinct. The point is so important and so distinctive of the new religion that I shall offer no apology for devoting to it a moment's consideration.

In the life of the pre-Christian world it may be said generally and epigrammatically that progress was sought by leaving home. The domestic hearth blazed chiefly for the young and for the female. When the youth went forth into the world, he went forth from

home; he left the hearth and the females behind. Woman had no share in the government of the state; the qualities of womanhood were deemed disqualifications for public life. The progress from youth into manhood was essentially a losing sight of the old home. The man conquered the world by forgetting his childhood, by ignoring, if not suppressing, the domestic feelings, by allowing the memories of the household to fade in the far distance. The world was defined by him as the region which lay beyond the family circle.

But the conception which *Jesus* formed of human progress was not only very different, but in radical contrast. To Him the progress from youth to manhood was not the *abandonment* of an old field, but the extension of an old field. In *His* view there should be no going out from the family circle into the world; there should be a bringing of the world into the family circle. Let us say you are a member of a typical household — a Nazareth household. You have a circle of

brothers and sisters for whom you have a devoted affection. There are two possible ways in which a new religion might come to you. It might say, 'I want you to enter upon a new kind of love—a love which now you know nothing about, but which will be revealed to you when you consent to receive it.' Or it might say, 'I am quite content with your present form of affection, and I am quite content that you should continue it towards those brothers and sisters. But without changing the *form* of your love, without diminishing the *amount* of your love, without leaving the present *objects* of your love, I should like you to extend the privilege to a wider circle. I should like you to ask yourself, not whether you are right in loving your present brothers and sisters, but how many more brothers and sisters you could love in the same way. I should like you, sitting by your own ingle, to consider whether the warmth of your home interest might not be diffused beyond its original limits.' This latter voice is the voice of Christianity.

On its human side the religion of Jesus is he effort to construct a cosmopolitan *home*; n its Divine side it is the effort to glorify a niversal *Father*. On both sides it is essen- ially the religion of the *family*. I have heard t said that Christianity was narrow at the eginning because it exhorted only to 'love he *brethren*.' But I say that this exhorta- ion expresses, not the beginning, but the final oal of Christianity. What the religion of esus contemplates is a brotherhood of *Man*. What Jesus seeks from beginning to end is n extension of the family relation from sphere o sphere until it shall include the united orld. His first recorded utterance is, 'Wist e not that I should be in my Father's remises?' one of His latest is, 'In my ather's house are many mansions.' The orld to Him is ideally a colossal *home*— ne potential scene of a united family group hose union is not the less complete ecause it exists along with individual arieties. The house has many mansions; ut in spite of that, its brotherhood is un-

broken, for all its inmates are the children of one Father.

But if this be the Christian ideal of the world's final goal, where shall we look for the starting-point? Can there be any spot but one—the home? If the consummation is to be the affection of a Father's house, must not the beginning be the consecration of my *own* house? The idea of Divine fatherhood derives its beauty from the impression of human fatherhood. If the impression of human fatherhood has been bad, the Divine relationship will convey a repellent association. Many a Sabbath-School child when told that God is its Father and Jesus its elder brother says in its heart, 'I hope not!' It has seen only a father's dissipation and felt only an elder brother's blow. That is just the reason why every Sabbath-School teacher worthy of the name makes it his or her earliest care to visit the pupils in their own houses. If you want to teach a child that heaven is his home, that God is his Father, that Christ is his brother, that the ties which bind the world are family

es, you must begin by purifying the original leas. You must make the thought of home ndearing, the name of father sacred, the sense f brotherhood protective, the relationship of ne family divine.

And now perhaps we can understand the cal beginning of the league of pity. We an see how it is that Jesus in teaching His sciples to light the world began by teaching em to light their own dwellings. We can ark the significance and the appropriateness that method which made the innermost and e narrowest circle the origin of all. I said the previous chapter that when Jesus put e child in the centre of the ring He meant symbolise the advantage of the hopefulness youth. I must add here that He meant symbolise something more. He designed emphasise the truth that the home sphere us to be the germ-cell of the new develop-ent, and that, however wide the ring might this ring was ever to circle round it. It s the revelation of a doctrine which con-dicted all former doctrines—that in a deeply

significant sense the first was to be the last and the last first. The final stage of man was to be the consummation of his beginning; he was to return at last to the brotherhood of home. Long as seemed the interval between the domestic hearth of Nazareth and the many mansions of the Father's house, the house with many mansions was to be built upon the model of the home of Nazareth. Indeed, there is to my mind something autobiographical in the ring of this late voice of Jesus. Why should He invest His heaven with the attributes of a home? Is not the word 'homely' synonymous with 'plain'? why make it descriptive of a glorified world? The answer must be, because to Jesus it is *not* synonymous with plainness. If to Him the most endearing name for Paradise was the house of a father, we receive a flood of light upon His childhood's days. The curtain which the historian has not lifted has been lifted by Himself, and we have been permitted to get a glimpse of the truth that His earliest impressions were those of earthly peace.

O THOU, who hast planted the family tree, let me rest under its branches. Help me to sanctify my home, to light it with the lamp of cheer, to warm it with the fire of love. Often have I thought of these words of Israel's Psalmist, 'I shall walk within my house with a perfect heart.' It seemed a very small sphere for perfection to walk in. But I understand its importance now. My home is not to be my *primitive* state; it is to be my final state. In my own house Thou art training me for my Father's house. My family virtues are to be the ripest fruit of thy tree of life. Shine on them, O Lord, that they may grow. Teach me that my home duties are my most religious duties. Teach me that Nazareth is not the beginning but the end. Teach me that the place prepared for man in the many mansions is a mance prepared for the household fires. Reveal to me that my hope for brightness lies in the return of the *morning* star—that star of domestic love which preceded the jealous struggles of the day. Thy call to me is a calling home.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EXTENSION OF THE RING

I HAVE said that the course of human sym
pathy is from within outwards. The first ste
of the league of pity has been on the lines o
this development. Jesus has begun His co
operative ministry within the circle of th
smallest ring. He has allowed the little ban
to receive the earliest benefit from the wor
it has inaugurated. We are now to witnes
a wider movement. Let us ask, as a pre
liminary question, what we should *expect* t
witness. Before we take our stand in th
great gallery to survey the Portrait of Jesu
let us consider the picture of human life fu
nished by our own experience. I do not wis
to create any theory; I propose to take m
impressions from the Portrait alone. B
surely it is legitimate to ask whether th

spect of this Countenance is or is not familiar
o us, whether there be anything in it to which
ur experience says 'Amen'! We are quite
ble to mark the next step in the sympathetic
narch of Jesus; the evangelic narratives are
greed about it. But is it also the step of our
earts? Do we recognise its truth to nature—
o our nature? Do we feel that the experience
hich it expresses is a universal experience—
n experience natural to man? If so, our
udy of the Portrait of Jesus will be immensely
ncreased in interest and enormously quickened
n penetration.

Let us go back, then, to our own home
rcle—to the days of our youth. Our first
mpathies, as I have said, are family sym-
athies; the league of pity is a home league.
low is it to pass into foreign relations? How
it to get outside the family circle to enclose
ther circles? That is a question which each
ay answer by an appeal to his own ex-
erience, and which cannot be answered in
ny other way. Let me appeal to *my* ex-
erience—my personal memory; I feel sure

it will not be found abnormal. My recolle
tion, then, is that my outside sympathies we
first excited by the things which I did n
understand—the forms of darkness which h
something mysterious about them. I rememb
distinctly my earliest sensations in looking
a funeral. They were those of deep sympath
but the sympathy was all for the dead. T
sorrow for the bereaved did not enter into
at all. My compassion was for the still for
which was being mysteriously whirled aw
into some underground quarter, and which
believed would experience in that quarter
sense of imprisonment and loneliness. Loo
ing back at this early form of compassio
I feel that the mystery was the main sour
of its existence, and that the removal of t
mystery would have taken the compassi
away.

I have said I do not believe this experien
to be abnormal. I think the forms of sorr
which impress not only the child but t
youth are generally those which throw a m
over the imagination. I have seen a b

manifest his earliest trace of feeling by shedding tears over the fate of those who, he was old, had gone to the place prepared for the wicked. In this case the power of the calamity lay in the fact that it was not a calamity of the common street. Martin Luther was first awakened to the serious aspect of life through seeing a man struck by lightning. Now, measured by anything that is merely physical, death by lightning is by no means the saddest form of dissolution. It is rapid, painless, unheralded by any bodily decay; from the purely physical side many would choose it in preference to other forms. But then, to Martin Luther the physical side of such a death was precisely that which had least importance. It seemed to be separated from other deaths by a special act of Divine Will. The man appeared to have been marked out to die, individually aimed at from out the mass of humanity. It looked as if he could not be waited for in the ordinary course of Adam's race, as if an extra thunderbolt had to be improvised to accelerate his doom. The

experience of Martin Luther is the characteristi
experience of every mind which is still in th
stage of unscientific simplicity.

Now, throw yourself into the position
this initial league of pity. It has begun b
the exercise of a merely family sympathy
it is about to cross the line. *Where* shall
cross? At the point where human sympath
in general makes a transition from the hom
into the world—the point where the clou
takes the form of the mystery. Is there suc
a point in its present view? Yes. As th
league of pity emerges from the house
Simon a whole world of sufferers is befo
it; but its eye rests pre-eminently on o
band. A single individual of the compan
had been healed by Jesus before entering th
house of Simon. But he had been healed o
of his line and, as it were, by accident; he ha
interrupted the service of the synagogue. B
now this man's class is systematically soug
for, selected from other classes. It is a my
terious band. It is a company of m
grievously afflicted, yet with no visible sig

f the source of their affliction. Like Jacob t Peniel they cannot give a name to the resence which has made them halt and naimed. *Un*like Jacob, they are sure it is ot an angel. They call their complaint emoniacal possession, to indicate their in- bility to assign to it a human cause. Their revailing impression is a feeling that there re two lives within them, that their soul has ecome the servant of another soul. They ave a sense of double consciousness—the xperience of an inward dialogue in which heir natural life is talked down by the ehemence of another speaker. Each man eels himself divided into two men—the lower conqueror, the higher a slave—the lower uling the house of the spirit, the higher rembling beneath his rod.

Of course they were what in modern times ould be called the victims of insanity. Yet am not sure that they had not discovered omething which sane people do not discover. great writer has said of the mind that here are colours which the cloudy day alone

reveals. It may be that the abnormal mind has glimpses of what the normal mind cannot see. It is no new doctrine that there are two natures in every developed man—a higher and a lower. Does not Paul speak of a law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing the latter into captivity? What is that but a philosophic statement of the same experience which we call a mental aberration in these men of Galilee! Very striking to my view is a study of these eccentric victims of suffering. We think of them as poor creatures, yet they seem to me to have been originally the most intellectual men of their community. Indeed, their intellectual power appears to have gone in advance of their moral character. In their state of aberration they were the first who recognised without suggestion the Messianic dignity of Jesus. One part of their nature cried out, 'Thou art the Holy One of God'; if they had felt themselves free they would have come to the new Light. But the other life, the lower life, held them back. It said, 'Do not go; this Holy One of God

come to torment you, to curtail you, to deprive you of your freedom.' And the product of the two voices was unrest—fierce, tumultuous, maddening unrest. Intellectually these men were the legitimate children of their century, and therefore they were the children of storm.

It has always seemed to me that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, a writer of the same century, has their case in view in words which he applies to all Christians. He says that when a man comes into contact with the Portrait of Jesus his life is separated into two lives: 'The Word of the Lord is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the animal and the spiritual nature.' Here is almost an exact description of the symptoms of the possessed. If that be a correct diagnosis of the incipient life of the soul, then was the state of these unfortunate individuals simply the exaggerated perception of a universal fact, the over-clear discernment of an inward struggle which belongs to the mental develop-

ment of *man*. They were mistaken in believing that the impeding foe was a foreigner; he was one of their own household. None the less must he be expelled, lifted from the threshold, driven from the consciousness. The possession was one of thought; but it was not on that account less intense or less real. There is no grasp so iron as the grasp with which an *idea* holds.

How, then, is Jesus to deal with this possession? Shall He tell the man that the hand which holds him is not a foreign hand? Shall He tell him that it is his own higher self striving against the life that is restraining it? Not so. The Son of Man knows what is *in* man; He will not wreck the cure by ruffling the patient. I have heard the question asked by Christian apologists, 'Did Jesus believe in the possession, or did He accommodate Himself to an existing belief?' Of *course* He believed in the possession. So far as the *fact* is concerned, there was no accommodation necessary for Him, there is none necessary for *you*. It is beyond all question that one life within the

n was impeded by another life, was re-
ained by the force of his lower being. It
s no misconception of a primitive age. The
to be expelled was a real antagonist, a real
drance, all the more real because it was
th-born. But that was no reason why Jesus
uld contradict the patient's cherished belief
t it was born *elsewhere*; that was to en-
nger the validity of the healing. The vital
nt was that the hindrance should be removed,
that its human origin should be vindicated.
the physician of a mental ailment, the first
ng requisite is that he should put himself
the place of the sufferer. Other maladies
rely require a sympathy with *pain*; this
ds a sympathy with limitation. If I have
deal with the mentally afflicted I must
tract my own nature so as to meet theirs.
nust learn to think with their thoughts, to
with their eyes, to palpitate with their
usions. I must divest myself of my
erience. I must meet them on their own
und, not on mine. I must reason with
m on their own assumptions, not on mine.

I must study to imagine things as I have *n*
felt them, to deal with things as I have *n*
known them. There is no such self-abnegatio
as is involved in the contact with ment
disease.

It is to this period of the human life
Jesus that I refer the beginning of that sta
in St. Paul's ladder which is described in t
words, 'He was made in the likeness of me
It is not the incarnation of Christ in humani
that is spoken of; *that* came when He to
the 'servant's form.' But this is an incarn
tion of the human life of Jesus itself. It w
one step of humiliation to assume the likene
of *Man*; but it was another and a deeper st
to assume the likeness of *men*. The plu
form implies more than the singular. It sa
that Jesus clothed Himself not only in t
attributes of the race but in the peculiariti
of the individual. If ever such a process fou
its beginning in the soul of Jesus, it was he
To heal the possessed He had to put Hims
in the *place* of the possessed. He had to be
in sympathy below normal humanity. No

Bodily healing could for Him have involved
lh a strain. Physical pain is the common
ritage of man; it was the heritage of the
man soul of Jesus. But mental aberration
not the common heritage of man; least of
was it the heritage of Jesus. To put Him-
in the place of the demoniac implied more
Him than it would have done to you;
uld I be misunderstood if I said it involved
re difficulty? We meet most readily that
f in another which we ourselves can picture
experience. We can pity the blind, because
can shut our eyes; we can sympathise with
deaf, because we can close our ears; we
even compassionate the mentally deranged,
ause we have moments of folly. But Jesus
l a perfectly balanced mind—a mind which,
the view of His earthly contemporaries,
gested the thought of 'fulness.' For Him
enter into the spirit of the demoniac was
neeting of extremes. It was wisdom trying
picture the path of folly; it was the calm-
s of implicit trust seeking to figure the
ors of a shattered brain.

POSSESS my soul, O Christ! I feel tha
something *must* possess me. My hea
cannot be its own master; it must be rule
either from above or from below. I have n
life within me strong enough to rule me fro
above; if Thou leavest me alone the lowe
life will conquer. Come into my soul,
Christ! Come, and take the place from whic
my higher self has fled. Come, and restrai
the advance of the lower man. Come, an
possess the gates of my enemies—the gat
by which they issue forth on me. Come, an
make me Thy captive evermore. Put Th
fetters on me—Thy golden fetters which mak
free. Put Thy mark on me—Thy mark
ownership which ennobles. Put Thy fear
me—that fear of meanness which makes th
coward brave. Put Thy yoke upon me—th
yoke of love which makes the burden ligh
I shall own no other master when I a
possessed by *Thee*.

CHAPTER XV

THE EDUCATIONAL RETICENCE OF JESUS

I HAVE said that the sympathy of Jesus was spontaneous; it was not suggested by the thought that it befitted the *Messiah*. But when He became the head of a league of pity it was not enough that His *own* sympathy should be spontaneous; He had to train into spontaneity the sympathy of others. We have seen that He began by following the law of human experience. We have seen that according to that law human sympathy begins in the innermost circle—the family circle, and spreads itself outward to the circumference. We have seen that its first outward movement is towards those which are fraught with wonder, suggestive of mystery, out of the common round. And we have seen Jesus guiding the league according to this instinct of nature, bending His steps

in the direction where its incipient sympath
should best be stimulated. From the house
Simon's family sorrow He has led His disciple
into the fields at eventide, and allowed the
eyes to rest on that class of sufferers of a
others the most mysterious—the men who see
to occupy the borderland between two world
It is His object to descend from the rare
the commonplace, from the sufferings on t
mountain to the sufferings on the plain whe
all men meet. That descent is to be gradu
Step by step the league of pity, like
Divine Leader, is to come down the hill—
proceed from the solitude to the intercour
with a few, from the intercourse with a fe
to a meeting with the many, from a meeti
with the many to a contact with the world.

Accordingly, we are not surprised that aft
the demoniac comes the leper; this is Luk
order—what is more to the purpose, it
Mark's. In proceeding from the demoniac
the leper, Jesus in a sense came down the h
The leper was nearer to the common d
than the demoniac; his complaint was pure

ysical; it was essentially a suffering of the h. Yet, strange as it may seem, it was not complaint itself that excited attention. ysical as was the disease, loathsome as were signs, conspicuous as were its peculiarities, mind of the son of Israel fastened on none these things. To him the horror of leprosy precisely in the thing which was not seen which really was not *there*. If from one nt of view the disease stood at the opposite e to demoniacal possession, from another l a clearer point of view it was more allied demoniacal possession than to any other ment. The misery of the leper in the eyes he Jew was not the real uncleanness of his n but the supposed uncleanness of his heart. was believed to be the victim of a visitation m God. The plague from which he suffered s associated in the public mind with the hand Providence. The uppermost idea concern- it was the thought of mystery—the sense n unseen touch, the presence of a voice that still. The leper, like the demoniac, stood to the eyes of the league of pity, not as one

who bore the ills which flesh is *heir* to, but one who carried in his flesh a mystic spiritu element from which humanity at large w free.

So far, then, we have a continuation of t educational process of Jesus. But now I wi to direct attention to a point which first occu in the healing of the leper and which seems the outset to be at variance with the idea any educational process at all. It is a disti tively new feature in our study of the Portr of Jesus. Hitherto it has not caught our ey When it does catch our eye the impressi is not at first altogether pleasant, because appears to suggest an irregularity in the p file. The front view is all that could desired. We see the leper displaying a fa which as yet is rare, 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Th canst make me clean.' We see Jesus joyfu accepting his approach, greeting him with friendly touch, and cheering him with rapid words, 'I will, be thou clean.' We the cure complete, the leper cleansed. Th we have a sidelight, and it seems an a

iimax. We expect to hear Jesus say, 'Go nd proclaim to all your brethren the glad dings of redeeming love'; instead of that e dismisses him with the words, 'See thou y nothing to any man!'[1]

Now, there are circumstances in which such reticence would command our instant approl. In the case of one not confident of his wers we should commend the modesty that thheld his name; we should commend it en after a *successful* effort. But at no time m we attribute such a spirit to Jesus. Not en in the days preceding the gospel narrative, nen, as I hold, He took His mission on trial, m we attribute to Him the shrinking of diffnce. The very thought of making an effort satisfy the holiness of the Father was, as I ve said, the boldest idea that ever entered o the heart of man. Every healing act of sus was on the lines of this boldness; it was attempt to glorify the Father by beautifying the creature. Every act confirmed to Jesus

[1] The prohibition to the demoniac (Luke iv. 41) is not a case the same kind; that was a wish to prevent *blasphemy*.

the validity of His mission. Was it any pa
of His policy to appear less confident than H
was? Was it not an advantage that me
should see how fearless He was, how convince
He was? Nay, was it not desirable that me
should share His conviction, should participa
in His confidence? The modesty which wou
be commended in an incipient littérateur mu
be denied a place in the Portrait of Jesus.

Moreover, from the testimony of Jesus Hir
self we have the best proof that a shrinkir
spirit was not the cause of His reticenc
On an after occasion He says in so mar
words that it was only a *temporary* expedier
'Tell the vision to no man, until the Son
Man be risen from the dead.' He wished co
cealment to be broken after He had pass
away. He felt that His absence would rend
beneficial that publicity which His presen
made undesirable. And here at last we beg
to see light—light from the direct words
Jesus. The question narrows itself into a ve
small compass. Why did Jesus deem th
His presence on earth rendered publicity u

sirable? If we can find the answer to that, shall have solved the whole problem. At st the answer appears difficult. His presence med to facilitate, to accelerate, the course charity; it was sweetness and light; it was ness of joy. The fame of that presence uld have quickened the drying of human rs. It would have made benevolence easy. would have congregated the world of Jewish ferers round a common centre. It would ve dispensed with the need of private enter- se. It would have relieved many hearts of xious responsibilities. It would have sent h inquirer to the fountainhead. One is l disposed to say, '*Why* hide the leper's e?'

And the answer is, 'Just *because* of all these efits; just because the visible presence of us would have made charity an easy thing.' member what it is that Jesus desires. It is simply the healing of humanity; it is man's *cation* to be the healer of humanity. From moment in which He became head of the gue of pity His primary object became, not

the *abolition* of the hospital, but the trainin
for the hospital. If the Father had empowere
Him by one sweeping fiat to make the world i
stantaneously whole, He would not have use
that power. He would have preferred th
old alternative, the slow alternative. If He ha
been looking simply to the *cure* of the worl
the quickest mode would have been the bes
But He was looking to the *curing* of the wor
—the human sympathy by which the healin
was to come. To Him the most precious pa
of that sympathy was the *seeking out*
disease; 'The Son of Man,' He says, '
come to *seek* that which was lost.' The
words express a real fact of His experienc
they express the conviction that for Him a
sympathy must begin in seeking. Therefo
He desired that His followers should *a*
seek. He did not wish His league of pi
to be saved trouble. He did not wish a
cases of distress to be brought to its ve
door so that it could not *help* aiding. Su
would have happened if His power had be
proclaimed. There would have been a visib

rthly centre round which would have circled e victims of human sorrow. The league of ty would have been spared the pain of loco- otion, spared the pain of investigation. There ould cease to be any need for 'considering e poor.' The function of sympathy would be mited to the hand. It would no more require eliberation, judgment, discernment. It would se its character as an intellectual power. It ould become an attribute rather of the body an of the soul.

Therefore Jesus said, 'Let the veil fall.' He lt it expedient to cloud the brightness of the rospect. The exercise of human sympathy emanded a certain amount of darkness. All ducation requires some reticence on the part the teacher; if the mind of the pupil is to e drawn out he must in some things be left to mself. The school of Jesus was no exception. e felt that for the league of pity absolute ght would be destructive, too much help inous. Therefore in the days of His earthly resence He forbade its members to make Him nown—forbade them to render easy that path

of benevolence which ought to be a path
anxious inquiry.

We hear a great deal about what is call
the silence of God—the veil of mystery whi
besets the world. Christian apologists ha
not scrupled to say that the silence began wh
the world rejected Jesus. But here is a silen
of God which originated in the very presen
of Jesus—which by His own admission wou
have had no existence if He had been abse
Here is a silence of God which comes in t
very heart of the gospel history, which is p
claimed to be an integral part of the *plan*
that history. It comes, not from the anger, b
from the favour of heaven. It is sent, not
retard but to accelerate, not to destroy but
fulfil. Standing in the gallery before the gr
Portrait, I am glad that, where so many pha
of man's experience have been recorded, t
phase has not been neglected. We have
our unrevealing moments—our moments wh
the spring of life seems dry. The follower
Christ has felt these a special difficulty, a
he has sought to explain them by the *imp*

tion of his following. It is well that from e great gallery itself there should come a ggestion of another kind—the suggestion at the silence of God may be one of the *ivileges* of the follower of Jesus. It is well at among its other revelations the gospel ould reveal an hour of silence—an hour nose silence is found to have been part of the ighty drama, and whose stillness has been a ge in the progress of mankind.

ORD, in the hour when I feel Thy silence, remind me of this command to the er. Remind me that Thy education of my ul demands hours of silence. Remind me at if I would grow to the perfect stature the lp must not be all on *Thy* side—that there ust be moments in which I shall feel myself ne. Reveal to me that I grow, not only by *y sight* of Thee, but by my want of Thee. t me learn the blessing of individual effort the blessing of being left to choose my n way. I thank Thee that Thou hast not

sent too much light—light that would ma
my will impossible. I thank Thee that Th
hast left a margin for my free choice. It
only those in the highways and the hedg
that thou *compellest* to come in. The creatu
of the field are more guided than I. T
instinct of the bee is more unerring than
reason; but I prefer my reason; it participa
in the hour of Thy silence.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIRST CONTESTED MIRACLE

ERE are some incidents of life which are ply milestones; there are others which are turning of a corner. The first indicate ely an advance on the old road; the second er us into something new. I am now come n incident in the life of Jesus which I have ays regarded as marking a distinct trans- n in His history. So far as we have yet e there has been no dispute as to His power; ything has conspired to re-echo that call ch He heard within His soul. A league gathered round Him drawn from those had seen the lowly environment of His y years. The metropolis has given Him ience; the provinces have followed the ropolis. He has been more anxious to e His words proclaimed than His wonders;

but He has not succeeded in *concealing* wonders. No one has questioned the genu ness of His cures. There has been a dis as to whether He was right to heal on *Sabbath*; but the *reality* of His healing p has hitherto been unassailed. We are a to mark the first instance in which it assailed. First instances are very sugges they reveal the incipient germ. We shall therefore with great interest to this begin We shall feel as if a key were put into hands by which to open all the coming d Why did the Jews reject Jesus? is a que which can only be answered by looking t dawn. To the dawn, then, let us go. L take the first case of scepticism which gospel narrative reveals. We shall find be the germ-cell out of which has been w the whole fabric of future opposition.

But first let us see what the incident is marks the turning of the corner. The cu which falls upon the leper on the highway within the private room of a house in C naum. It is an upper room and it is cro

re are representatives from all classes,
n by the fame of Jesus—even from the
es. Not only is the room full, but the
oaches to it; the stairs are crowded; the
t door is blocked. Four men make their
through the street bearing a litter on
h is stretched a helpless paralytic. They
t their steps towards the house where Jesus
pounding, to His principles. They cannot
near the door. They try another approach.
y mount on the roof, break open the light
ring, and let down their burden with cords.
s looks upon the paralytic; but the thing
h attracts Him is not the paralysis; it is
isely what the paralysis does not reveal.
sees that the outward impotence has been
y the result of a mental distress preying
he nerves—the distress of a soul wrestling
the angel of conscience. Instead of put-
His hand upon the body Jesus lays His
h upon the mind, 'Son, be of good cheer,
sins are forgiven thee!'

nd here the storm breaks—the first storm
ever arose over the reality of a miracle of

Jesus. What was the cause of this storn
was not the sense of wonder; Jesus H
declares that it would have been deemed
wonderful if He had said, 'Take up you
and walk.' Human wonder is excited b
which meets the eye, and this did not me
eye; it was a command uttered to the
and whose effect could only be known
soul. More conspicuous things had been
by Jesus, and the storm had not com
woke not over the feast of Cana; it bro
over the pool of Bethesda; it rose not ov
calm that followed the expulsion of the de
Here was a work more silent than these
hidden from the public view. The excit
it created cannot be explained by the po
the marvellous.

Nor can it be accounted for by the Me
claims of Jesus. Put the question to
miscuous assembly, 'Why did the Jews
the Son of Man?' the general answer w
'Because He claimed to be the Christ.'
yet nothing is more certain than that
not the explanation. About ten years ag

on the spiritual development of St. Paul,
ed my conviction that Christianity never
nted from Judaism on the ground of the
anic claim of Jesus; and the same state-
has with much more force and ability
recently made by Mr. Robert Anderson
book, *The Silence of God.* How could
wish nation deem any man a heretic for
ng to be the Messiah! If a scion of the
rn race of Israel were to put forth to-day
nsions to be the long-promised hope of
nation, *that* would not make him a heretic
e Jew. If the Jew is to have a Messiah
, that Messiah must begin as a mere
ant. Before he can be recognised he
aspire. It will be for the nation to
ine his credentials. If the credentials
ound inadequate, and if the man persists
claim, he will *then* be a heretic, for that
be to falsify the prophetic ideal. But it
falsification of the prophetic ideal simply
ire to the Messianic office. Hundreds of
have done that; and in doing that, from
ational point of view they have done

no wrong. The announcement by a
Israel that he had a personal call to
guide of the nation was itself a perfectly
mate act and one which did not involv
slightest suggestion of schism or rebellio

When Jesus claimed to be the Chri
offended nobody. He broke no national
tion; He traversed no Jewish law. H
before His countrymen a legitimate s
for investigation. If His pretensions
inadequately supported it was for them
so; but the pretensions themselves w
treason. When Jesus said to the Sama
'I am the Christ,' He uttered no voice u
ful to the creed of His fathers. Whe
wrought healing works in support o
claim He did nothing but what the r
demanded He should do. How came
in this upper room of Capernaum ther
the first mutterings of that mighty storm
swelled ever louder and more loud u
culminated at last in the tempest roar, 'C
Him, crucify Him'?

And the answer to that question come

inging. It was because within that room
first claimed a power which never had
conceded to the Christ—the forgiveness
n. It was not His *aspiration* to Messiah-
hat inflamed His hearers; it was what He
uted to Messiahship. He had stepped
the lines of the Old Testament. He had
l for the Messiah what the sacred writings
is country had never dared to assign to
He had asked for him a prerogative
n the sons of Israel had attributed to God
—the power to pardon sin. No lawgiver,
rophet, no priest had assigned such a
r to the coming Christ. The later Isaiah
come nearest to it. He had seen in the
iah the expiation for human sin—the Holy
of God whose sacrificial life was to atone
he iniquities of the world, and whose
ation of human possibilities was to make
cession for the transgressors. But even at
nearest point there was a great gulf fixed
een the claim of the later Isaiah and the
put forth by Jesus. It was one thing to
ensate the Father for the guilt of man; it

was another thing to *pardon* that guilt
former could only be efficacious if accomp
by the human ; the latter was always h
be an act emanating from power Divine.
been often said that Jesus proclaimed H
to be *more* than the Messiah. I would
say, He demanded for the Messiah mor
seer or prophet had ever conceded to his
—a power which from the depth of ag
been recognised by the Jewish race as no
superhuman but super-angelic, and as m
the distinctive boundary line between th
ture and the Creator—the forgiveness of

This shows that the Portrait of Jes
not, as some have thought, get its superl
touches from the hand of Paul—not eve
the hand of John. These touches are
They belong to the most primitive recor
records most near to Judaism. Noth
Paul's Epistles, nothing in John's Gospel
to the men of that day have implied
assertion on the part of Jesus than His
in the house of Capernaum. No Englis
no European can have any conception o

s involved to the Jew in a man's professing
ancel the moral debts of the past. It was to
equivalent to what the aspiration to omni-
ence would be to us. To the Jew the greatest
ibute of God was His moral attribute; his
a of eternity itself centred round the thought
holiness. To cancel moral debt was the
atest power in the universe because it was
power of holiness. When Jesus offered to
cel moral debt He professed to be in pos-
ion of an attribute which to the Jew had
ays been the one attribute that God had
shared with man. Man had a ray of God's
sical power, a beam of God's wisdom, a
n of God's will, an imitation of God's
vidence; but he had not in himself one
k of God's holiness. The man who said,
am holy,' must at once be convicted of
phemy. He might say with impunity, 'I
powerful,' 'I am wise,' 'I am resolute,' 'I
far-seeing.' But should he say, 'I am holy,'
had laid his hand upon the sceptre of the
rnal and aspired to sit on a mightier throne
n David's.

I hold, then, that this incident is the b
ning of distinctive Christianity—of Christi
as distinct from Judaism. Often have we
the question asked, When did Christianity
from the parent stream? Men have fixe
various spots as marking the point of diver
between the Old Testament and the
Some have seen it in the fall of Jerus
Some have found it in the protest ag
circumcision. Some have recognised it i
conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Some
detected it in the outpouring of Pent
The writer of the Acts declares 'the dis
were called Christians first at Antioch.'
all these things are mere manifestations;
lie on the surface; they themselves dema
origin. Men might be *called* Christians fi
Antioch; but peculiarities are a long ti
existence before they receive a name.
difference between the old and the new,
soever it began, began in the heart of th
The germs of the man begin while the
still called boyhood; the germs of the Chr
began while he was yet recognised as a

want to know, not when the name of Chris-
was given, but when the distinctive fact of
ristianity appeared. And I find the moment
e—in Capernaum's upper room. Not in
claim of Jesus to be the Christ do I hear
distinctive note of the new evangel. That
really a note of Judaism. It was a clarion
st of the Old Testament. It was a voice in
sense at variance with the voice of Moses
the Prophets. But the claim in the upper
m of Capernaum was one which Moses had
er heard, one which the Prophets had never
wn. It was the claim that the Messiah,
nsoever he should come and whosoever he
uld be, should wear in a human heart the
htiest prerogative of the Almighty God—
power to cancel the moral debts of man.
as the assertion that the authority to pardon
should be vested, not in an angel, not in an
angel, not in a cherub or seraph, but in a
, and should be vested there on the express
und of his perfect humanity—because he
to be the *Son* of Man.

I THANK Thee, O Christ, for this begin
of Thy stream. I thank Thee tha
issuing from the hills of God has been int
field of pardon. I thank Thee that its
ripple has been on the banks of merc
thank Thee that it has borne to man th
gift from the Father which other streams
denied him—the power to forgive. Men
to see that power only in the Father;
hast claimed it for man. I thank Thee
Thou hast claimed it for man. May *I* in
sense be a sharer in that power! It i
hardest thing in the world for my natu
share in. The power of pardon is the p
of love; and love comes only from Thee-
the stream that makes glad *Thy* city.
not because I am so human that I find it
to forgive; it is because I am not h
enough. There was none human enoug
Thee; Thou alone hadst power to pa
because Thou alone wert the Son of Ma
is not angelic power I need to make m
unto Thee; it is human power. To learn
pity I must come nearer to the hea

manity, which is *Thy* heart. Make me more man, O Christ, that I may receive more wer to pardon. I pray often to be forgiven Thy grace; teach me to *forgive* by Thy ce. Inspire me with a breath of Thy rdoning power. Draw me nearer to the ntains of human sympathy—*Thy* fountains. ng me to the living waters where those who cleansed become the cleansers. Guide me the steps of that altar where those that have de their peace become the peacemakers. ad me to that throne of judgment where se that have overcome the world arrive at man tenderness. I shall understand Thy wer to pardon when I shall complete the perience of a man.

CHAPTER XVII

PREPARATION FOR A MISSIONARY CRUSADE

THE revelation in the upper room of Capernaum was essential as a preliminary training to the league of pity. Before its members could preach Christ they must know what Christ was *distinctively*. They must know, not merely what He held in common with other masters, but what He professed in separation from other masters. So far, they had made a step in advance; but other steps were to come. Indeed, I am quite convinced that the true secret of the development of the gospel narrative is to be found in the education of this humanitarian band. Jesus was ere long to send them forth upon their journey of beneficence. Every previous stage therefore must be an educational stage, something preparatory to the coming way. We have

seen that the sympathy of the band began where all sympathy begins—in the home circle, that where they emerged from the home circle was in cases of mystery and wonder. The aim of Jesus was to universalise these sympathies—to extend them by degrees from the circle of the family into the circle of the world. The greater part of the process could only be completed in the actual course of missionary work ; but *something* must be done before starting — something to widen the natural narrowness of the heart. It must be done both by word and by deed, both by exhortation and by experience. The word comes first. There is little to arrest us between the upper room at Capernaum and the sermon on the hill—that hill which witnessed His address to the world. As the scene changes from the one to the other we feel as if Jesus had at last cleared His path, and were ready to begin His march as the captain of that great army which was to be made perfect, through suffering, for bringing many sons unto glory.

I have said that the sermon on the mount

was an address to the world. And so it was; it was '*the multitude*' that Jesus had before Him. But it is stated with great significance that He only began to address the multitude when the *disciples* came. We often speak *at* people when we are not specially speaking *to* them. We make a statement which applies to all; but we wish it to be overheard by *some*. Jesus on this memorable hill was speaking to the world; but He was speaking *at* the disciples. He wished His sermon to be an instruction to all, but a model to *them*. The sermon on the mount is beyond all things a missionary address. It is the inaugural charge to the league of pity. As yet the members of that league have had no charge; they have been waiting for their commission, waiting under the Master's eye. But now the solemn crisis is coming. The hour dawns when they are to go forth alone, to represent *to* the world and *in* the world the presence of the Christ. They cannot go unfurnished; they must receive some guidance for the way. They have had a glimpse of the claims of *Jesus*;

they must get a glimpse of the claims of humanity. Therefore it is that this sermon is beyond all others a humanitarian sermon. The disciples have heard Christ's ideal of the Father; they are to hear His ideal of the brother—His sense of what man ought to be, of what he was made to be, of what he *will* be when the converting power has been perfected.

Is there any keynote to this sermon on the mount? Is it a mere collection of fragments culled from the various fields where the voice of Jesus dropped them? No. Fragmentary as it seems, I am convinced that from beginning to end there runs one air through the countless variations. What is this air, this thought which remains changeless amid the manifold? It can be expressed in one word—self-forgetfulness. This is the burden of all the song, the moral of all the music. However the tune may seem to deviate, it comes back to this refrain. Let us listen to it for a moment. Standing in the great gallery and keeping our eye on the Portrait, let us direct our ear toward the mount of revelation. Let us see

whether the Countenance blends with the music, whether the thought expressed in the face of Jesus is harmonious with the echoes which are descending from the hill.

The opening word of Jesus is the opening word of Israel's Psalms—'blessed.' The goal of the New Testament is, like that of the Old, the beatific glory of Man. Very striking and startling are the heights of glory which Jesus claims for human possibility. The kingdom of heaven, the inheritance of the earth, the satisfaction of the spirit, the vision of God, the reputation of being called the children of God, the privilege of illuminating the world—these are among the summits at which the human soul is permitted to aim. But how is it to gain them? In the same way as, according to Paul, the Son of Man reaches His own glory—by the act of self-burial. Familiarity with the Christian faith has made the thought a truism; to the empire of the first century it was a wild paradox. The Roman said, 'The lofty mind shall receive the kingdom'; Jesus said, 'No; it is the poor in spirit.' The Roman

said, 'The men of force shall inherit the earth'; Jesus said, 'No; it is the meek.' The Roman said, 'It is the war-makers who shall be called the sons of God'; Jesus said, 'No; it is the peace-makers.' On the hill where *Jesus* stood the palm of victory is reserved for the self-forgetting.

But Jesus proceeds: 'Do not identify self-forgetfulness with self-restraint. You cannot shine by merely repressing your own darkness; you must catch another's light. If you want to stand beautiful upon the hill of God, it is not enough that you suppress your self-love; you must love another. Holiness is not merely the restraint of old passions; it is the advent of a new passion—what you will learn to call the Lord's Passion. It will not make you lovely if you simply abstain from self-glory; you must seek the glory of another object, of a higher object. You will only forget your *self* when you "glorify your Father."'

Then Jesus shows the weak points of the old restraint—of the ancient law. Its weakness was the fact that it *was* restraint. It was not

self-forgetfulness; it was self-imprisonment; it kept from doing wrong by shutting the door. Jesus says: 'I am come to open the door, to set the prisoner free. But do not think I am therefore come to abolish the work of the law. I am come to make that work more complete. *Fear* can check the infliction of pain; love can do that and more—it can strew the path of pain with flowers. Fear can tie the hands from evil; love can wing the heart to good. Fear can say, "Thou shalt not"; love can soar beyond the prohibition and exclaim, "Thou shalt."'

Jesus proceeds: 'There are two ways in which a man may be outwardly good—by remembering himself, and by forgetting himself. He may draw his treasures from the bank of earth, or he may draw his treasures from the bank of heaven. On the one hand, his goodness may be the result of self-consciousness. He may do high things for a low motive—the wish to be seen. He may use the means of grace for a selfish end—cast his pearls to the swine, give that which is holy to the dogs.

He may give alms to be thought charitable. He may fast to be deemed pious. He may pray in order that he may prosper. Such a man will value his almsgiving because it is a penance, his fast because it is a misery, his prayer because it is long and full of repetitions. But *I* show you an opposite way to the same goal. I show you an almsgiving which is a privilege and not a pain—the self-forgetfulness of love. I show you a fast which forgets its own hunger—the preoccupation of love. I show you a prayer which postpones its own wants through the want of others pressing on its heart—the unselfishness of love. And the value of this almsgiving, of this fasting, of this prayer will be not its penance but its joy, not its hardness but its ease, not its gloom but its glory.'

Upon the subject of *prayer* Jesus lingers longest. No wonder! The root of a man is not his deed but his wish. That which makes his wish is not the what but the why—not the thing he asks, but his motive for asking it. Jesus prescribes no *form* of prayer; He

prescribes a manner of prayer. He says: 'The glory of your wish is not its length but its limit—its submission to self-sacrifice. Ask nothing that shall unhallow God's name, nothing that shall retard God's kingdom, nothing that shall run counter to God's will. Let all your prayers be for three—yourself, your world, and your Father. Never forget to limit your own desire by the desire of the other two. Remember your Father's glory; remember your brother's need. When you pray, say "*Our* Father." When you come to the altar to offer your petition, and when you there remember that your brother has a wish counter to your own, leave your petition unoffered until you have found a place for *him*. When you ask the sustenance of life, say "Give us *our* daily bread." Do not pray unqualifiedly for rain because your own district has been dry; perhaps your brother's district has had too much rain. Ask your Father so to regulate the world that in due season bread shall come to all.'

I have said that Jesus prescribes no *form* of

prayer. Indirectly, He tells us the reason for this. He says that the same form of prayer or fast or almsgiving might come either from love or selfishness. The same spiritual house may be built either on the rock or on the sand. To Him the foundation is everything, the superstructure quite subordinate. Two men may present an edifice made from the same materials; Jesus will examine neither building. He will ask, not 'Of what is this made?' but 'On what does this repose?' He fears nothing so much as 'false prophets'—outward virtues springing from selfish motives. He fears such virtues not only because they deceive the world but because they deceive their possessor; they keep him from seeing the beam that is in his own eye. His words are in effect: 'You may say "Hallowed be Thy name" when you want only the temporal blessing which God in the Old Testament promised to the pious; then are you seeking merely what the Gentiles seek—what you shall eat and what you shall drink and wherewithal you shall be clothed; your prayer is a secular prayer. Or, you may

say, 'Feed me and clothe me that I may live to hallow Thy name, that I may be able to help others to win their daily bread'; then are you seeking God in His kingdom, His power, and His glory; your prayer is a voice of the Spirit.'

MARVELLOUS to me are these words of Thine, O Jesus—marvellous even at the end of so many days. Even yet they come to me from the height, from the mountain summit. I seem to understand the meaning of the words, 'When He was *set* His disciples came unto Him.' When I hear Thee speak I think of Thee as seated, not standing. I am impressed above all things with Thy calm repose. Thou wert on the summit of a second Sinai. Around Thee were greater smoke and flame, greater thunderings and lightnings than assailed the first law-giver. Men's hearts were in a ferment; human faith was shattered; earthly hopes were dead. But there was no ferment in Thee, no tossing of the spirit, no trace of

the storm. Thy vision of glory was without perspective. It was not foresight but sight, not a glimpse of the future but a revelation of the hour. 'Blessed *are* the poor in spirit; theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven.' It was not a world to come; it was here now—behind the smoke and flame, behind the thunderings and lightnings. There have been those who have conquered by *faith*; not such wert Thou. Thou hadst no need of faith. Thine was a mountain view, a Pisgah view. Others believed in *Thee*; but Thou wert not a believer; Thou wert a seer. There was no *messenger* between Thee and Thy Father. Thine was not trust but experience. Thou wert breathing the perfumes of Paradise. Thou wert hearing the songs of the choir invisible. Thou wert beholding the unveiled face of the Father. Thou wert receiving the tidings fresh from the Promised Land. No wonder Thy words have never grown old!

CHAPTER XVIII

PREPARATION FOR A MISSIONARY CRUSADE—*Continued*

THE preparation of the league of pity for its approaching journey was, as I have said, to be twofold—a training, first of exhortation and secondly, of experience. The sermon on the mount had discharged the former office the latter was still unfulfilled. Hitherto the sympathy of the band had moved within narrow lines. It had been essentially a home sympathy. They had begun in their native Galilee; their work had been bounded by their interest. It was not the design of Jesus that it should be thus bound. He meant this little band to be the light of the world. It was a far cry from Galilee to the world — from sympathy with men as comrades to sympathy with man as man. Hitherto also, as we have

seen, the specimens of suffering had been abnormal. They had been cases of speciality —the contact with disorganised minds and mysteriously afflicted bodies. It was essential that the sympathy of the band should not *remain* there. The taste of a thing specially pungent is apt to deaden the taste of everything else. So with man's sympathy with things abnormal; it is apt to draw away the mind from needs universal. This was a thing to be counteracted, prevented; and He who had studied so deeply the nature of the human soul was of all others best qualified to do this.

From our present point of view the interesting feature in this training by Jesus is not the cures but the diseases; it is in these we mark the transit from the particular to the universal, from men to Man. The first trace of the league's contact with universal calamity occurred in a little village of Galilee called Nain. It was the contact with nothing abnormal, nothing exceptional. It was a meeting with the old old story—the tale of human bereavement. We feel that Jesus Himself

was arrested by the spectacle. We feel that this is one of the cases in which He did *not* work a cure for the sake of teaching a lesson —not even for the sake of teaching a lesson to the league of pity; He healed the wound because He Himself was wounded by it. Yet it is possible that those of the band who were present might have received from this incident some touch of humanitarian impulse. What hindered such an impulse from completeness was perhaps just the intensity of the case. A funeral cortege on the way to the sepulchre its burden, one cut down in the flower of youth; that youth the only son of one who was herself a widow; the signs of distress manifest in every countenance and audible in the sobs and tears of a multitude—these were the elements that lent tragedy to the scene. Probably some member of the league had friends among the mourners; the proximity of Nain to Nazareth makes this likely. In any case there were circumstances which made the incident seem an *aggravation* of the common lot of humanity, and which thus might tend to

deaden the sense of universal participation. That sense of universal participation was reserved for the lesson of another bereavement which was to meet them as Christ's earthly ministry drew near its close.

Meantime, something must be done to widen the circle of Christian sympathy. The disciples are about to step out beyond the threshold of their own environment. They are not at first to step out very far; yet they are to make a transition; and the transition step is the most difficult of all. Can anything be done to stimulate them? The sermon on the mount has been delivered, and its power has been educational; are there no educational *deeds* to follow and endorse the precepts of unselfishness?

Yes. Very close upon the sermon there come two singular episodes in the ministry of Jesus. There is no connection between them beyond a moral connection; the one occurs on the sea, the other on the land. If *geography* be the only link in the formation of the gospel narratives, then is the unity

of the gospel simply that of a string. But if Jesus has set before Himself the education of a league of pity, geography falls into the background. Sea and land become alike indifferent to us except as educational mediums; and the bond which connects the narratives is found to be a bond of the heart. It is in this latter light that I view the evangelical history. I follow the most approved order of *time*; but the change of *place* has for me little significance; and I seek to weave the events together rather by a mental than by a physical chain.

We will take up, then, the *educational* aspects of these two incidents. We will begin with the earlier—the storm on the Sea of Galilee. At first sight it seems a useless episode. It appears to contribute *nothing* to the mission of Jesus. Even the *stilling* of the storm is in itself no contribution. It is something outside of humanity. It touches no disease of man's body; it heals no moral unrest of the soul. We see a moment of danger followed by a moment of readjustment — a sensation

of panic succeeded by an experience of calm. At the close of the process things are physically exactly where they were before, and we feel disposed to say, what on another occasion was said by the spectators of another scene, 'To what purpose is this waste?'

But we are looking in a wrong direction for the effect of the storm. I believe that this storm occupies a distinct place in the educational system of the gospel, that it occupies this place not by accident, but by design. Its force was spent upon the sea; but, more than any other episode of the sacred narrative, it influenced the *land*. It formed a turning-point in the daily life of these disciples. Originating on the waters, it cleared a path for them on the dusty plain, and swept from their way many of those objects which had been a real barrier to their missionary progress.

It is my opinion that, of all the events of the gospel narrative, the one most analogous to the storm on the Sea of Galilee is that incident which looks most *un*like it — Jesus

waiting by the well. I should say that what Samaria was to the human soul of *Jesus* the Sea of Galilee was to the league of pity. You will remember the place we claimed for the well of Samaria in relation to the *personal* work of Christ. We saw that on His road to Galilee He was met by an experience of a peculiar kind; He was put in the attitude of a suppliant. The human part of Him, the part of Him which grew and developed, was made to begin at the ordinary foundation. We saw that human sympathy invariably originates in a sense of want, that we learn to give by having, ourselves, received. We found that Jesus in His passage to Galilee—the great sphere of human need, was made to drink at the ordinary source of the fountain. He passed through an experience of extreme prostration, and was content to accept human aid. Samaria was thus in more than a geographical sense His road to Galilee.

But now Jesus is called to repeat His experience—not in Himself but in His followers. The members of the league of pity are to

follow not only His example, but His life-stages. Hitherto they had encountered no personal experience analogous to that at the well of Samaria. They had not an adequate sense of human need, nor, so far as we know, had they as yet found anything to interrupt the optimistic vision of youth. *Such* was no fit condition for a missionary journey—for a journey in which they were to be all alone. They must be made to feel the sense of solitude which is involved in responsibility, and the sense of need which is born from it. The optimistic vision of life must be broken; the false enthusiasm must be damped that a new enthusiasm may arise.

And the needed crisis came in the crossing of the lake. The crossing of the lake was no new occurrence. The water was their natural element; they had been born to it, they had been bred to it. It was but a five-miles' passage, and it was as familiar to them as crossing the street. But it is in familiar things, not in strange things, that the crisis of life generally appears. These men had witnessed

things out of their element, beyond their understanding. They had come into contact with demoniacs, lepers, sin-stricken paralytics; yet their crisis had not come. It was to meet them in the most unlikely spot of all, in their own field—the field of waters.

The waters were not the object of their voyage; they were seeking the land — the other side. As so often happens, *they* were going for one purpose, *God* was *letting* them go for another. Jesus accompanies them. Very significant are the words in which this is indicated, 'They took Him, even as He was, into the ship.' I take this to mean that He was not in a condition for physical exertion — for rendering nautical help. One of His *human* hours was upon Him; He was weary with the burden of the day. Almost immediately after starting, nature asserted itself, and He slept. Suddenly, from the opposing hills a blast swept over the sea—a storm of unwonted violence; and the tiny craft began to show signs of yielding. It is not often that fishermen are afraid; but these

men were. Perhaps their recent contact with the physical presence of the Master had been prejudicial to their natural boldness. They may have learned to lean too much, to act for themselves too little. Be this as it may, their fear was abject, pitiable. For the first time since they had joined the league they felt themselves weak in the very sphere where they used to be strong. It was not weakness in preaching, weakness in healing, weakness in converting. It was weakness in managing their native element—those waters from which they had derived their daily bread. With Jesus *asleep* in the ship, the ship of their common life had become itself rudderless, and there remained to them nothing but the cry of helplessness, 'Lord, save us, we perish!'

Now, this cry was the real object of the voyage. It is the storm itself, not the stilling of the storm, that constitutes the significance of this narrative. The stilling of the storm, as we have said, left physical nature just where it was before. But the storm woke

in the hearts of these men echoes that never died. It taught them their need—not as Galileans, not as Jews, not even as Christians, but as human creatures; and in so doing it gave them their earliest lesson in the earthly side of the Messiah's mission — the sympathy of man with man. It was a sense of this gain that in a later hour prompted one of the leaders of the band to pray that none might receive the call to a post of glory until after he had 'suffered a while.' Said Jacob to the angel, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me'; and the blessing was the shrunk sinew. It is ever the first blessing of the missionary. Before I go forth to heal my brother-man, I must learn from my own heart the weakness at the heart of humanity.

THEREFORE, O Christ, I bless Thee for the storm. I thank Thee for the moment of loneliness which I called the *sleep* of Thy power. It seemed to me as if I had the waters all to myself, as if there were none

to help me. In that hour my pride died, to rise no more; I felt how poor a thing I was without *Thee*. That was my shrunk sinew, that was my ministrant glory. My fetter became my wing. It is my *conscious* weakness that makes me Thy messenger to man. The hour which the sailors rejected has become the hour of blessing. I said, 'Let us take ship and go to the other side'; midway I was met by a tempest; the voyage was never completed. Yet the incomplete voyage has been my farthest travel. No journey has given me so wide an experience. The wings of that storm have borne me into the heart of humanity. I have learned more from the tempest than from the haven. The shelter of the haven could bring me into contact with the few; but the waves of my troubled heart have laid me on the bosom of Man.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SIMULTANEOUS SUPPLIANTS

I STATED that between the sermon on the mount and the first missionary journey of the league of pity there are two episodes which have, to my mind, a very distinct bearing on the development of the new movement. The first of these has already been considered. We pass now from the significant incident on the sea to the significant incident on the land. The storm on the Sea of Galilee was a great preparation for sympathy with man ; yet it was rather a preparation *for* it than a lesson *in* it. It taught the league of pity the intrinsic weakness of human nature and its inability to battle unaided with the storm ; and to this extent it bound the little band to the brotherhood of all souls. Yet this result was, after all, only negative. It was a common levelling

down ; it was a work of depression. Sympathy, to be perfect, needs more than depression ; it requires the power of selection. The sense of a common want may lead us to *pity* ; but something more is essential to enable us either to seek or to save. The movement wanted from the league of pity was not one of mere emotion ; it was a drastic movement. The members of that league were to make the transition from their own circle into other circles, from their own circumstances into other circumstances. They were to set forth upon a pilgrimage of ever-expanding benevolence, from the narrow limits of the home in Galilee to the many mansions in the house of the Father. Such a goal demanded not only a community but a versatility of human sympathy—a power to pass rapidly from the interests of one to the interests of another. A more stimulating influence was required than the levelling effect of the storm.

And that stimulating influence was forthcoming. It came in an episode which, so far as I know, is unique even in a unique history.

Let us briefly recall the circumstances. Jesus has been visited by one of the leading office-bearers of the synagogue of Capernaum. He is evidently a man of great repute; and it is equally evident that he does not imagine he is endangering that repute by the mere acknowledgment of the Messianic power of Jesus. He is driven to Jesus by an exigency. He has a little girl lying at the point of death. It does not occur to him that the power claimed by Jesus could extend beyond actual contact; doubtless he too would have objected to the height of Christ's aspiration in the upper room. He does not ask Jesus to heal his daughter by a word spoken through the distance; he asks Him to *come.* Jesus accepts him at his own level; He accompanies the afflicted father to his house of mourning. An immense crowd follows them. The high position of the suppliant and the boldness of his demand give dramatic interest to the situation. With the solitary exception of a family connected with the league, others had brought their sick to *Jesus*; this man proposes to bring Jesus to his

sick. It is boldness originating in depth of feeling, and it evokes a corresponding effect on the part of the multitude. They are eager that the suppliant should be successful, that the girl should not die before the arrival of Jesus. The members of the league are specially so. This is to them a golden opportunity for recognition by the higher powers—for the acceptance of their Leader as the national Messiah. They fear to be too late; they are disposed to hurry on.

Suddenly, there is an interruption—an interruption the cause of which is not at once apparent. Jesus halts in the march of mercy, turns round and asks, 'Who touched me?' There is a general disclaimer. The disciples are ruffled by the delay. I think I can detect a certain flavour of impatience in their words, 'The multitude throng Thee and press Thee; and sayest Thou, Who touched me?' It is as if they felt themselves to be losing time, as if they were eager to resume their journey. The object in advance of them seems so advantageous that anything in the rear is deemed unworthy of their attention.

Not so thinks Jesus. He insists on prolonging the delay; He demands investigation: 'Some one did touch me, for I perceive that virtue has gone out of me.' Then, in answer to His importunity, there comes trembling through the crowd a woman who for years had been the victim of a disease which, like leprosy, had always been associated with ceremonial uncleanness. She had felt herself too vile to ask openly for healing. Hoping to get the benefit without the publicity, she had come behind in the throng and laid her hand upon the hem of Jesus' garment. She now stands forth, to confess what she believed to be a crime, to hear this supposed crime declared to be a glory.

Now, the crucial point of this narrative lies in the declaration of Jesus, 'I perceive that virtue has gone out of me.' The point is that before the appearing of the woman the cure was already completed, and that Jesus knew it to be so. So far as the healing was concerned, there was no ground whatever for interrupting the mission to the relief of the

dying girl. It was not a case in which two people demand the simultaneous attendance of the same physician to the exclusion of one another. The woman did not interrupt the mission to the girl—not by a moment of time. A halt in the march there was; but it was not caused by her, nor had it anything to do with her cure. The interruption came from Jesus and from Jesus alone. Why? It cannot be supposed that, in the view of the gospel narrator, He was seeking personal information. It cannot be supposed that, in the view of this narrator, a Being gifted with Divine power could be destitute of Divine clairvoyance. What, then, is the meaning of this feature in the Portrait of Jesus? A girl is dying—nay, she is already dead. The Master will arrive too late to fulfil the purpose for which He was summoned. Why has He delayed? Is it that He may manifest a greater glory? Is it that, instead of merely reviving a dying spark, He may require to kindle a new one? You may quote the case of Lazarus in support of such a view. But when we come to the case of Lazarus

we shall find ourselves in a new era. We shall find that the work of Jesus has assumed another attitude, an attitude which is quite inapplicable to the circumstances of the Galilean days. To my mind it would mar the beauty, it would destroy the simplicity, of this narrative if you suffer yourself for a moment to believe that Jesus delayed in order to effect a greater miracle. It would place the elaborateness of art in a scene of rustic nature; it would substitute *electric* light for sunlight; it would spread a carpet of painted flowers over the natural flowers of the field. The glory of Galilee is its simple-heartedness; the glory of the *Christ* of Galilee is His adaptation to the scene. We dare not mar the picture by exhibiting a hot-house growth in the place where tropical plants luxuriate in the sun.

The question recurs, Whence this accepted interruption of the mission of Jesus? If it was not needed for the cure of the woman, if it was not desired as a means of turning the healing of disease into the vanquishing of death, is there any other ground on which it can be

explained? There is—an educational ground. Remember that at this period Jesus was more than a healer; He was beyond all things a teacher of *how* to heal. He had become the head of a little band to whom His cures were object-lessons. Every work He performed had a double value; it had a value to the sufferer, and it had a value to the league of pity. The members of that league were the pupils in a sick-nursing establishment; they looked on. Jesus knew they were looking on. He had them ever in His mind as hospital students. He said and did many things in their presence which He would not have said and done in their absence. As on the mount He spoke *to* the multitude but *at* the disciples, so in the hospital He spoke *to* the patient but *at* the students. These Galilean days were days of clinical instruction. As Jesus paced the wards of that great infirmary His eye was as intent on the symptoms of the pupil as on the symptoms of the sufferer. Wherever He saw a defect in the student's sympathy, wherever He witnessed a slackness, or onesidedness, of

interest, wherever He beheld a tendency to centre the attention on one point to the neglect of another, there He perceived that there was need for development, there He felt that there was work to do.

Now, this I think was one of these cases. It was an instance of what I might call the clashing of gospel interests. Two claimants had appeared for the sympathy of Jesus. They were vastly different in status. One was high; the other was lowly. One was confident; the other was shrinking. One was basking in the favour of the religious public; the other was under a cloud of religious reproach. One, from a worldly point of view, could bring much good to Jesus; the other could give nothing in recompense. Only one of these suppliants was visible to the members of the league; they had neither eyes nor ears for any other. From *their* point of view, I do not wonder. This ruler of the synagogue seemed the very chance for them. Here was a golden opportunity that might never return—one of the tides which, if taken at the flood, might lead on to fortune.

What better fortune could await the Christ than that He should be recognised by a leader of the Jewish theocracy! Would it not at once put an imprimatur on the new movement? would it not save much climbing of the hill? I do not wonder that to men who felt so intensely the offence of the cross the call from Jairus came like a blast of triumph. I do not marvel that for the moment they saw only one goal and were absorbed in a single eagerness —the desire to press on.

But this was the very thing which Jesus wished to counteract. Had He not told them in the sermon on the mount that they should consider cases of conflicting interest? Had He not told them that a man should not offer his gift without taking into account his relation to his brother? Was not this exactly a case of the kind? Should He veil from them what He knew to have happened? Should He conceal from them that His had been a divided sympathy? Should He hide from them the fact that, without disparagement to the daughter of Jairus, virtue had first gone out

from Him towards a humbler suppliant? No; He must not hide it. They too must be made sharers in the counter-interests of His heart. They too must be made to participate, meanwhile in the wideness, ultimately in the universalness, of His sympathy. They too must be rendered capable of taking up into the chariot of pity one whose case was not the direct object of that chariot's journey. Therefore it is that Jesus halts in the march, even though it is a march of mercy. Therefore it is that He bids the procession stand still, and recalls the eyes of the disciples from the van to the rear. He felt that their interest was naturally more identified with the case of the suppliant Jairus than with the case of the suppliant woman; and therefore He desired both them and Jairus to understand that there is a point in which every man's wish is interrupted and traversed by the wish of another.

HELP me ever, O Christ, to *see* this point of interruption. When my interest is in the van, help me to remember that the

interest of another is in the rear. Never let me forget Thy rule for golden wishes—Thy lesson how to pray. I shall never be on Thy mount in prayer until I have a mountain view—Thy view. I must be able to look on every side—to consider how *my* wish will affect the wish of another. Give me this all-round view, O Lord; set my feet in this large room. Sometimes a voice says to me, 'Pray Christ to press on; your interest is in the house of Jairus.' Let me look back before doing so, and see whether there be not a suppliant in the rear, some one whose prayer is, 'Let Christ *linger* on the way.' Ever let there be present to my mind the multitude that are pressing on Thee. Let me remember the many souls that are touching Thee, with wishes varied, conflicting. Let me remember that my gain may be my brother's loss. Let me pause solemnly, with uncovered head, before the temple of prayer. Let me stand in the cross-way where the temple is approached from many sides. So shall my wish be golden, so shall I ask what shall be pleasing to Thee.

CHAPTER XX

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE FIRST MINISTRY

JESUS has been preparing the league of pity for a great missionary journey. That missionary journey, although not the origin of Christianity, is the real beginning of the Christian ministry. It is the first aggressive movement on the part of the Church visible. Hitherto Jesus has acted alone; the Church has been merely a spectator. Now *Jesus*, for a time, is to be the spectator, and the Church is to act alone.

Very interesting, therefore, promises to be the contemplation of this first ministerial movement. We are standing at the fountain of all Church life. We watch the play of the waters with more than average attention. We expect to find in the action of this primitive ministry something which will stand

s a guide for all future ministries. We look
or great things from the *fountain*. However
npeded the stream may be in its *course*,
hatever obstructions may accumulate as the
aters pursue their way, we feel sure that
ne *source*, at least, will be free. We expect
nat the opening scene will be a scene of
efreshingness, of bounding liberty, of gushing
pontaneity. To drop the metaphor, we are
onvinced that this little band of disciples,
suing as they do from the primal seat of
l Christian knowledge, will exhibit that
nperiority to later Churches which such a
irect origin seems to imply.

Now, in this expectation it appears at first
ght as if we were to be disappointed. As
e listen to Jesus prescribing the boundaries
f the first diocese our immediate impression
one of incongruity. There seems a dis-
roportion between the means and the end.
ndeed, in studying the constitution of this
rst Christian ministry I am impressed beyond
erything else by the number of limitations
nposed on it. Its restrictions seem greatly

to predominate over its liberties. One feels at times as if a drag were being put on the wheels of sympathy lest it should run too quickly down the hill of human needs. That this conclusion is the reverse of the truth I know; but the fact remains that there is a suggestion of limit where we expected freedom. We shall best overcome the obstacle by facing it.

There seem to me to be four ministerial limits here laid down by Jesus—a limit to sphere, a limit to foresight, a limit to message, and a limit to courage. I shall look at each in turn. And first, there is at this stage a distinct limit to the apostolic sphere of action: 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' This is the last thing we should expect. Is not Jesus conscious that His field is the world? Yes; He never from the beginning had any dubiety about that. Nothing in the whole gospel is to me more certain than that the interest of Jesus was from the very

utset a universal interest. He may have rown in *some* experiences; He never grew n this. So early as His passage through Samaria He saw and declared that there was worship which should survive both Jerusalem nd Gerizim. So early as the sermon on the nount He calls His disciples, not 'the light f Galilee,' not 'the light of Israel,' not even the light of Asia,' but 'the light of the world.' And can we forget that it was precisely when nnouncing the downfall of Judaism that His wn claim to universal empire became the oudest and the most unqualified, as if to rove that He had never built His hopes pon the perpetuity of the Jewish nation: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my vords shall not pass away.'

Why, then, this fencing of the new diocese, Go not into the way of the Gentiles'? Is his the Being whom the fourth evangelist lescribes as 'lighting every man that cometh nto the world'? Is this the Man who thus lescribes Himself, 'Other sheep I have which re *not* of this fold'? Is this the Personality

who declares in the very face of the Mosaic ritual, 'Many shall come from the east and from the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God'? How shall we account for the inconsistency? How shall we explain the fact that a soul so wide as that of Jesus should have been content to contract its range from the sweep of a boundless plain into the circuit of a tiny garden?

I answer, in the *interest* of the plain. He refused to send these men to the foreign field because He had a great sense of the *claim* of that field. The foreign mission required more training than the home mission. Remember the insular position of the Jew. It was the most insular of all positions—a solitude of *mind*. If it had been merely a separation of languages, interpreters might have spanned the gulf. But it was a separation of thought, of culture, of the very mode of conceiving things. No interpreter can pass such a chasm as that; not even a gift of tongues could pass it. To be a missionary to the Gentiles, to be

a missionary even to Gentilised Samaria, a man had to live abroad, to get acclimatised to forms of thought called heathen. The third evangelist declares that if there were any other way of becoming a foreign missionary it must be a supernatural way; he attributes this charge to Jesus: 'Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.' Even with his light from heaven, even with his culture from earth, Saul of Tarsus is not sent at once into his destined Gentile field; had it been a Jewish field, I am convinced his mission would have been immediate. I can see nothing but breadth and liberality in the limited diocese of the first league of pity.

The second limit is on the power of foresight: 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall

speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.' Should we not have expected something different here also? Is there not a great danger in a minister failing to measure his difficulties? Yes; but what Jesus wishes to guard against is, not the measuring of difficulties, but the measuring of difficulties in advance. Jesus wishes to limit excessive tendencies to look forward. And is He not right? Is there anything more hampering to a mind, especially to a clerical mind, than the perpetual *presence* of the future? Is this not itself the greatest limit to the powers of life? Is it not also an *intellectual* mistake? I am told of a task which I shall have to perform a year hence. I measure my own capacities and find that if the task were *now* before me I could not do it. Is that a fair measurement? Because I cannot do it now, does it follow that I shall be unfit for it a year hence? Can I forget that, while the *task* will remain stationary, *I* shall always be growing? The force with which I meet it in a year will not be the

same force with which I should meet it to-day. I am tormenting myself by a false estimate.

Where did Jesus learn this principle? From the experience of His own life. I remarked in a previous chapter that I considered Christ's words, 'Take no thought for to-morrow,' to be autobiographical. I think there is also a ring of autobiography in the words, 'The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.' Such a lesson could only have been learned from the struggles of a human soul. It is a lesson in the human, not in the Divine. He must have got it from experience. That soul which grew in human strength must have learned by the teaching of *life* that the morrow takes thought for the things of itself, that as a man's day is, so his strength shall be. Doubtless there were times in which, seen from afar, the difficulties on His path seemed insurmountable; but ever as He drew near there was revealed a hidden door. That was the truth which His life had taught Him; that was the truth which He wished inscribed on all other lives. Is it strange

that He should desire it to be written on the portals of the house of God?

The third limit is that of message: 'Preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Is not this a bald message for a Church to give to the world? Is it one stage beyond that of the Baptist? Is not the Baptist's fuller; did not *he* say, '*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'? Yes; but Christ's omission of the word 'repent' makes a new gospel. I have pointed out this in a previous chapter and in another connection, and I need not repeat it here. It is one thing to say, 'The door is open; gather in all things that are beautiful'; it is another thing to say, 'The door is open; gather in the *vile* things and *make* them beautiful.' The Baptist said the former; Jesus said the latter. To Jesus the sequel to the coming of the kingdom was expressed in the words, 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.' Apparently a mere reiteration of the Baptist's gospel, this gospel of the primitive Church

excels it by the whole height of the heavens. As far as east is distant from the west does the kingdom of Jesus outrun the kingdom of John. With John acceptance is conditioned on the amendment of life; with Jesus the amendment of life is conditioned on acceptance. The one says, 'Let God arise and His enemies be scattered'; the other says, 'Let God arise and His enemies be redeemed.'

The fourth limit is the apparent limit to human courage, or, which is more remarkable, to the courage of the Church militant. There is prescribed a strange mixture of bravery and caution. On the one hand Jesus exhorts His disciples to fearlessness. He bids them remember the protective care of the Father over *all* creation. He bids them remember the special place of *man* in the *scale* of creation. He tells them that the greatest place in man is the place which they are defending—the region of the soul. He says the sense of their value ought to dispel their fear. But on the other hand there is something which sounds like a warning *against*

this exuberance of courage. Amid such a display of confidence on the part of the Master one experiences somewhat of a shock to hear such words as these: 'When they shall persecute you in this city, flee into another.' It is like water poured upon fire. No portrait but the Portrait of Christ could without detriment have withstood an incongruity like this. How, in spite of it, has this Portrait preserved its glory? We should have expected One who took up so courageous an attitude to have bidden His followers *court* martyrdom; He tells them to *flee* from death! Yet His renown for sacrificial heroism has suffered no decline. Why?

It is because Jesus Himself has taught the world a lesson which the world has elsewhere never learned—that in the sphere of religion it is more difficult to live than to die. 'Whosoever shall confess me before *men*, him will I confess also before my Father'; to Jesus the sacrifice which involved most courage was not the surrender of the body, but the surrender of the will—the confession of His

name in the land of the *living*. His ideal of martyrdom was to take up the cross and *follow*. It never occurred to Him that in telling His disciples to flee from death He was granting them any relaxation. It never entered His mind that in bidding them live as long as they could He was lowering His standard of bravery. To Him the bravest thing, because the hardest thing, was to *carry* the cross. One of His disciples says of Him that 'He bare our sins in His own body *on to* the tree'—not merely '*on* the tree' as our version has it; he means that the life was, with Him, itself the martyrdom. What else does *Paul* mean when he speaks of 'bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus'? He proclaims the truth that the annals of Christian martyrdom are not confined to the hour of death, that there have been souls which have been courageous enough *not* to die, nay, courageous enough not to reveal their tears. There have been martyrs who have anointed the head and washed the face that they might appear unto men *not* to fast—who have covered

their weeds with flowers and hid their sorrow under a smile; and these are the bravest of all.

TEACH me, O Lord, to value my free cities—my unpersecuted cities. Teach me when one gate is shut to remember that another is open. Teach me the secret of not being crushed by calamity. I am too apt to sink in despair when a door is closed; help me to flee to the mercy that remaineth. I can only bear my losses by remembering unstolen joys. If I keep my gaze on the flower that is withered I shall only have courage to *die*. I want courage to live. Help me to look at the *un*withered flower. Lead me to the pastures that *still* are green, to the waters that still are quiet. Let me remember the things unfaded that *might* have been faded, the lights undimmed that *might* have been dim. Let me think of the treasures unspent, the hopes unbroken, the fountains unfailing. So shall I have courage to live, courage to bear. I shall survive every pain when I remember the 'rest that remaineth.'

CHAPTER XXI

THE LIBERALITY OF THE FIRST MINISTRY

I HAVE said that when Jesus told His disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles, He was influenced by no feeling of narrowness. I come now to the crowning proof of this; it occurs at the close of the very chapter where the seeming restrictions are tabulated. Jesus lays down His terms of admission into the first Christian Church. These terms are, to my mind, the most remarkable ever uttered to any guild, Christian or secular. Their remarkableness lies in their liberality. I do not mean that they prescribe no creed. How could they do otherwise than prescribe no creed? There was as yet no Christian creed to prescribe. The life of the Master had not been fully unfolded; His death was still unrevealed. Any terms of subscription must necessarily be

practical. But it is the practical terms that astonish us—they are so wide, so fearless. Religions are apt to be narrow at their source, and to broaden as they flow. Christianity is nowhere so broad as at the fountain, nowhere so intensely liberal as in the very place where it seems to exclude the Gentiles. There are three rules for admission to Church-membership here laid down by the Master Himself. They are the earliest ever inscribed on the portals of a Christian temple; yet they ought to be the marvel of all the centuries. No religion has ever *approached* their liberality; no later Church has thrown the gates so widely open. Let us stand for a moment in the dawn. Let us read in its light these three inscriptions. We shall see how broad they are, how free, how fearless; and we shall not forget that they are written by the very hand of Jesus.

They run thus: First, if any one appreciates an inspired man, let him be counted himself inspired; 'He that receiveth a prophet in the *name* of a prophet'—on the ground of his *being*

a prophet—'shall receive a prophet's reward.' Second, if any one desires to be good, let him get the *credit* of being good even though his deeds lag behind; 'He that receiveth a righteous man in the *name* of a righteous man'—on the ground of his *being* a righteous man—'shall receive a righteous man's reward.' Third, if any one performs a genuine act of charity, even though it may not be done directly in the name of Christ, it shall be esteemed a Christian act; 'Whosoever will give a cup of cold water only in the name of a *disciple*'—only on the ground that he is a fellow-sufferer in God's school of discipline—'verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.'

These are the three golden rules for the earliest Christian fellowship. Let us look at them one by one. First, 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.' Mark the qualifying clause 'in the *name* of a prophet.' It means 'because he *is* a prophet.' It is quite possible to receive a prophet on other grounds than that. It is possible, for example, to buy a

picture, and yet not to buy it in the name of *art.* There are four grounds on which a man may buy a picture. He may buy it from covetousness; he may say, 'A time is coming when this will sell at far more.' He may buy it from pity; he may say, 'I know this artist has a hard struggle.' He may buy it from pride; he may say, 'I *should* like to have the reputation of having a real Turner.' Or he may buy it from admiration; he may say, 'This is beautiful!' Only the last of these motives is a purchase 'in the name of *art.*' Jesus says that no motive but the last would prove the possession of a spirit kindred to the artist. All other reasons for buying are reasons outside the work; admiration is itself participation.

Let us apply this to the great Picture we are studying—the Portrait of Christ. I find in the gospel narrative the same four motives for purchase. I see the mother of the sons of Zebedee forecasting the future price it will bring—the 'right hand in the kingdom.' I see the Roman governor, Pilate, ready to give a helping patronage from sheer pity, mixed

with contempt for the artist's power. I see Nicodemus coming into the gallery when the Picture is in its first and popular days, and, as he observes how low it is hung, eager to be its possessor. And then I see a bidder of another kind; it is Peter Bar-Jona. He comes into the gallery when, in the eyes of men, the glory of the Picture has departed, and it is hung very high. Yet, spite of its obscurity, the eye of Peter sees it, and, singling it out from all beside, he cries, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!'

Now, this last was the only artist of the group. Jesus says to him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for *flesh and blood* hath not revealed it unto thee.' He had received the Portrait on its merits as a portrait. All the others before and after were influenced by considerations of flesh and blood; they were swayed by outside motives. Peter was attracted by the Portrait alone—not by what it would bring, not by the pride of having it, but by the intrinsic beauty of the Picture; he received the prophet in the name of the

prophet. Therefore, Jesus says, he is himself worthy to be enrolled among the members of the Royal Academy. Appreciation was the proof of inspiration. He might never paint a stroke of his own, never acquire even a smattering of the art; but he had seen the King in His beauty, and therefore he had proved himself to be partaker of that beauty. 'We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is' is the grand reasoning of an early Christian writer. It is incontrovertible reasoning. Like natures alone can recognise each other, and if we have seen the spiritual beauty we must ourselves be spiritually fair.

Second, 'He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.' Jesus says that if we love righteousness in *another* while yet our own life has given no outward sign of reformation, we shall be regarded as having already *begun* the life of righteousness. This is the germ of the doctrine afterwards called justification by faith. It says: 'When you are looking for the reform of a bad man, the first

hing you should look for is not a change of ction but a change of ideal. The measure of he man is not what he does but what he hinks, not what he is but what he would like o be. The first-fruits of his Promised Land re sent in advance as they were to the sraelites; but they come not in deeds but n aspirings. Take his estimate, not by the novement of his hand, but by the direction of is eye. That is the measure of him; that is he prophecy of him; that is the hope for im.'

This is no religious dogma. We can feel he influence of the principle on our daily ives; we reason upon it, we act upon it. You re, let us say, a district visitor in a very lepraved locality. You go into one of its ens of iniquity and meet a company of ill-ooking men. You begin to address them; ou tell the story of Jesus. As you proceed, here are various interruptions. Some laugh; ome hoot; some cavil; some say, 'It is easy or royal heads to bear suffering.' But there s one man who arrests you. He is as miser-

able in appearance as the rest. His life has evidently been quite as bad; the signs of waste are equally apparent. But the effect of your story is on *him* very different. As you begin to unfold the picture of moral heroism he utters exclamations of wonder. As you proceed, there come flashes of the eye—perhaps a furtive tear. As the tale of voluntary humiliation deepens, his mutterings become audible: 'That is a *man*,' 'That is a man I believe in,' 'That is a man I could trust'; 'If I had my life to live over again, I should wish to be like *that*.' What is your feeling under these circumstances? Is it not that this poor creature has already crossed the line that divides sin from glory, that he has already touched the confines of the kingdom of God? With hand and foot still on the earthly soil, with the grave-clothes still hanging about him, with the elements of corruption yet adhering to his garments, we feel that the man has even now made the transition from death into life. The dress of Lazarus may be indistinguishable from the dress of the dead; none the less the grave

as been opened and Lazarus has come forth. esus offers to such a man a passport into the Holy City.

Third, 'Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only in the name of a *disciple*'—only on the ground that the sufferer is a fellow-pupil in the school of God—'his act of charity shall be deemed a Christian deed; he shall in no wise lose his reward.' I have paraphrased the passage thus to express its spirit. The whole stress lies in the phrase 'only in the name of disciple'; and the key will be found in the foregoing words, 'he that receiveth you receiveth me.' Jesus has so identified His interest with the cause of suffering humanity that He regards the humanitarian as equivalent to the evangelical. There is a class of men in this world who do not feel themselves qualified for the communion of Christ's upper room. They are good men, true men, men ready at all times to express their love and loyalty to Jesus; but they do not see their way to climb so high. To such Jesus offers in the meantime a *lower* room. He offers a communion which

requires no climbing—rather, stooping. He offers to spread a table for which one quality alone shall be required—the power of charity. He promises to let each man pass the cup to his brother on the simple ground that his brother is in need. There will be no inquiry as to whether he is Jew or Gentile, Pharisee or Sadducee, apostle or layman. The only question will be, is he hungry, is he thirsty, is he cold, is he weary—is he bearing the *wants* of man?

That is Christ's promise. We shall see in the next chapter how He kept it. It is highly significant that the first ministrant incident which follows the promulgation of this third golden rule is the breaking of bread in the desert. I do not think *Jesus* designed the sequence; His sympathy moved on no mechanical lines. The promise involved in the third golden rule was not so much for any special time as for the groping Christians of *all* time. Yet this table in the wilderness rests in no accidental spot; it is spread in the design of the Father, and it is spread precisely at the

hour when its comfort would be most apparent. It breaks upon the eye just when there fade from the ear the last echoes of these words of Jesus which proclaimed to the missionary band His recognition of human charity as a Christian grace.

MEANTIME, my brother, the words, ere they fade, have a message for *you*. Mayhap you call yourself an agnostic. You are afraid of the sacrament of the upper room; it is too high for you; you cannot attain unto it. Be it so. God has spread for you a preliminary table—a table not in the upper room but in the earthly valley. The Master comes down from the mountain to meet you, to be on a level with you. He surrounds you with human needs—with children whose lips are parched with the thirst of the desert. He puts a cup of cold water into your hand and says, 'Pass it round.' Will *you* be the bearer of this sacrament for Him to-day? Leave the upper room till to-morrow; to-morrow will take

thought for the things of itself. But will you bear this special cup to-day—this cup of human charity? There is nothing mystical about it, nothing superhuman. It is made of earthenware; it is fashioned to meet the wants of the common hour. But if you will bear this cup, Jesus says it will, meantime, be counted to you for a sacrament. For you, the upper room is not yet furnished; but the *desert* is. See! the multitude is gathering; the heat is oppressive; the day is wearing on. The presence of the Master is unseen, but the famished crowd is visible. Will you, while the Master is behind the veil, put the famished crowd in His place? Then shall the voice of Jesus say 'He hath done it unto *me*.'

CHAPTER XXII

THE FIRST COMMUNION

ET me recall your mind to the course ob-
rved by that sympathetic wave which Christ
rred on the bosom of humanity. It rose in
e breast of a single individual—the Man
rist Jesus. It passed from Him to a little
nd of disciples which I have called the first
gue of pity. With that league of pity it
ot moving outwards—from a narrow into
vider sea. It broke at first upon the shore
family life; gradually the scope of its action
w more ample. At last we have seen it
ugurate a movement which carried the
gue of pity beyond sight of the original
d. To drop all figure, the first independent
sion of the league was a step quite in
ance of home. When Jesus sent His
ciples forth alone He sent them *beyond*

Galilee. True, their district was still a ci
cumscribed one, because their sympathy wa
still circumscribed. Yet it was larger tha
any hitherto assigned to them. They wer
instructed to pass out of merely local asso
ciations. The bread of life which had bee
transmitted from the hands of Jesus to H
disciples was to be transferred from the hand
of the disciples to the multitude. In othe
words, the multitude themselves were to b
made partakers of that revelation which ha
hitherto been imparted to the disciple
alone.

Now, let me remind you of the process b
which the previous stages had been inaugurate
We have seen how in the case of Jesus th
initial stage of active sympathy was precede
by an act of receiving; the immediate pr
paration for His ministry was the wearine
at the well. We have seen how in the case
the disciples the activity was *also* preceded b
an act of receiving; the immediate prepar
tion for their mission was the storm on th
Sea of Galilee. In both cases the passive e

erience of want was made the prelude to the ctive service of man. We are now to see a epetition of the process in the *third* stage. esus has gathered a band of His disciples; ne disciples have gathered a band of *their* dis- ples—a company who, while they remained utside, were called the multitude. This mul- tude is itself to be made a converting force the world. To become such a force it must e stimulated by world-sympathy. How shall reach that sympathy? What shall be its oment of transition? This shall be like the wo foregoing stages—a moment of need. The ultitude must, like Jesus, like the disciples, egin by receiving. It must before all things e wakened into a sense of its own privation. must be set in front of its mirror, must see self in the place of humanity. As Jesus assed into His mission from the well of ychar, as the disciples passed into their ission from the Sea of Galilee, so the multi- de is to pass into its mission from the Desert Bethsaida. Sychar, Gennesaret, Bethsaida —the well, the sea, the wilderness—these are

the three stages in the development of th primitive gospel.

The beautiful feature about the third stage as of all the others, is that it comes quit naturally. It seems to be the product of series of accidents. The disciples have re turned from their first missionary journey Their success has evidently been great; non the less are they weary and jaded. It wi be found that the collapse which follows th excitement of success is quite equal to th collapse which follows the experience of failur The eye of Jesus sees the signs of physica fatigue. With His all-round compassion, H does not wish the inner man to make ravage on the outer man; 'Come ye yourselves,' H says, 'into a desert place and rest a while It is a very beautiful feature in the Portrait Jesus. It is one where His humanity shine out with undivided charm. The interests the mission are for a moment in abeyance, an secular love reigns supreme. I do not thin the significance of this has been fully apprec ated. Jesus wants for an hour to tempt H

followers from His own public service. He subordinates the evangelical to the personal. He bids the gospel chariot stop for the sake of those who drive it. He asks a suspension of the cause dearest to His heart. There are times in which the wheels of the world's progress have been thus suspended. At such times we speak of the failure of Providence. Has it ever occurred to any other portrait painter than those who have painted Jesus to make the seeming failure a part of the glory? These gospel delineators have not been afraid to express upon the canvas the idea that public success may be arrested for the sake of a private and individual interest of the heart.

Stimulated by the Master's loving solicitude, the disciples follow Him into the wilderness of Bethsaida. But public interest refuses to give way to private feeling. A vast multitude are now surrounding them, partly drawn by the presence of Jesus, and partly by the success of the first mission. This crowd pursues the steps of the little band. It follows them into their retreat; it breaks the hour of their

solitude. Jesus had not calculated on the interruption, had not desired it. He had contemplated a breathing-space, a rest by the way. But the moment the interruption came, it was accepted as the will of the Father—that was the method of Jesus, always, everywhere. What was He to do with this crowd? Here, by the stream of events, were gathered together the three forces of the future kingdom—the Master, the disciples, and the multitude. Why had they met in the desert? Must they not have been gathered by the hand of the Father? If so, had they not been drawn together for the purpose of fellowship? Had not the time come for an interchange of sympathy? Was not this the place, was not this the hour in which to seek the basis for a first communion? Why not make this desert the first vocal spot, the scene for the welding together of classes, the locality where man should meet with man? Was there to be found in the precincts of this wilderness anything that could furnish a ground for the brotherhood of human souls?

At first sight it would seem as if there were not. The disciples were in a high state of exaltation; they had been lifted farther from the earth; they had left the multitude *spiritually* miles behind. How could that multitude reach up to them? They had no hand that could stretch so high. Their thoughts were still mundane, their hopes still secular, their aims still material. The desert *represented* this sense of separation on the part of the disciples. What was to be the bond of fellowship between this ungainly rabble and a little band of human souls soaring into regions of transcendent glory? They had come to enjoy their hour of special communion—that hour with which a stranger intermeddleth not. How could they admit such rough feet into the garden? Was it possible that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the sympathies of that worldly crowd should rise into union with the denizens of the hill?

It was not possible; Jesus felt it, the disciples felt it. But all at once, out of the sphere of seeming accident, there came the

revelation of another, a more excellent, way. The disciples suddenly made it appear that though the multitude were not in need of *them*, *they* were in need of the *multitude*. They made it appear that the thing wanted was not a chain to reach up but a chain to reach down. They showed by the display of a defect in their nature that the ladder required on this occasion was not one set up on the earth to reach the heavens, but one whose summit should be first fixed in heaven and which should then stretch down to touch the earth.

I have said that the door to this other mode of communion was opened by the revelation of a *defect* in the disciples. They betrayed a weakness in secular sympathy—in sympathy with the multitude *as* a multitude. I have no doubt they were eager for the Messianic welfare of the crowd. I doubt not they desired them to be among the number of God's elect, among those who should rend the air with the cry, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' That was *missionary* sympathy; and I give them credit for it. But that was not *human* sympathy. It was

not sympathy with the field *outside* the mission field. It was not a recognition of the fact that there is such a thing as earthly joy and that the absence of earthly joy is pain. There is as much narrowness in the inability to contract as in the inability to expand. It is not enough that a follower of Jesus should have universal *love*. I may have universal love and be without universal sympathy. I may wish with all my heart that the outside world should come to think as I think; this is universal *love*. And yet, all the time, between me and that outside world, there may be not one thought in common; I may depreciate its causes of joy, I may sneer at its grounds of pain. At the very moment when my benevolence for it is at its zenith, at the very instant when I am most eager for its future, I may be utterly divorced in sympathy from the interests of its passing day.

So was it with the members of the league of pity. They were panting to get rid of the crowd on any pretext. 'Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy food.' It was surely an unnecessary kind-

ness! The multitude were the best judges of their own hunger and the means of assuaging it; they could go away when they liked. We miss the whole point of the narrative if we imagine there was any danger of starvation. There *were* villages near, and the multitude knew it quite as well as the disciples. I gather from Matthew ix. 36 that the ground of Christ's compassion was not that they were in want of a *cup*, but that they were in want of a ministrant hand. The smallest part of a deed of charity is the gift; the main part is the giving. The complaint of the prodigal in Christ's parable is that 'no man gave unto him.' That has ever been the complaint of the masses. They have been able to get bread in the villages, but they have desiderated a helping hand from the upper ranks of their fellow-men. This helping hand is the real communion. Not the bread but the distribution of the bread is the thing desiderated. What the multitude in the desert wanted was a touch from above—not simply a touch from heaven but a touch from earth. They sought the sound of a voice

that was still—the voice of brotherhood from the higher level. It was this that brought them into the desert—the hope to be in some sense, however small, the recipients of something from the Master's hand.

I think the defect of the disciples was that they did not see this want of the multitude. It did not seem to them that the new evangel could have anything to do with the struggles of common life; its power to them lay in proclaiming a higher than the natural bread. It never occurred to them that to toil with success for the natural bread man needs something more than the natural—more, at least, than the material. They had not realised the fact that what helps the son of toil to win his material bread is the voice of his brother man—the voice of human sympathy, of friendly interest, of encouraging approbation. *They* had not realised it, but Jesus had. He felt that His disciples had not yet appreciated the *downward* sweep of His gospel. They had appreciated its power to lead men to heaven, but not its power to bring men nearer to earth—not the

effect upon the earth which such a power would produce. Jesus resolved that the disciples should learn this, that the multitude should learn this. He instituted on this spot the first communion; He based it on an earthly ground —a secular ground. The Last Supper was to be inaugurated on the fact of heaven's love for earth; the First was instituted on the basis of earth's need for heaven. The ladder was stretched from above to below, not from below to above. From the hand of the Master the secular bread descended to the nearest disciple; from the nearest disciple it passed to the whole league of pity; from the league of pity it was transmitted to the nearest of the multitude; from him it passed to his brother; from his brother it was handed to the next in nearness—until from the hill to the plain there reverberated the joy of one gift from a common hand.

O THOU, who loadest me with benefits, help me to pass them round. My brother is down among the multitude and he

wants communion with me. He wants the communion more than the bread. He can get bread in the villages as the result of daily toil; but that is not communion bread; it is not accompanied by the touch of a human hand. Teach me, as Thy disciples were taught, that my brother *waits* for this touch. Teach me that the greatest want of man is sympathy with his fellow-man. Enable me to remember that when I receive a precious thing from another I am more glad for the giving than for the gift. Let me put myself in the place of the multitude. Let me remember that the human heart is, deep down, always the same. Let me cease to impute to the multitude the mere sordid desire for gain. Let me learn that to them as to me the bread of life is sweetest when it comes from a brother's love. When I shall receive this lesson I shall no more seem that the presence of the crowd dims my communion with *Thee*.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE JOY OF JESUS

WE have now reached the widest field in which Jesus has yet stood. Remember what His course has been. It has been a progress from above to below. He has been struggling down into union with humanity. He has begun on the heights. Standing where we now do—in the wilderness of Bethsaida—let us cast back our eye to that other wilderness which beheld the dawn. Between the two deserts there is the length of a universe. In the wilderness of temptation Jesus was alone so far as *man* was concerned ; in the wilderness of Bethsaida He was the centre of a multitude. In the wilderness of temptation He was assailed by questions regarding the *supernatural* ; in the wilderness of Bethsaida He was met solely by the question of *bread*. In

e wilderness of temptation His attention
as riveted on the prospect of a Divine
mpire; in the wilderness of Bethsaida He
nsidered only the needs of a human soul.
's course from the one desert to the other
.s a descent into the heart of humanity,
d it was not precipitous but gradual. We
we marked the stages of its progress. We
we seen the life of Jesus moving at first
ne — unaccompanied by any guild of
mpathy. We have seen the formation of
league of pity consisting at first of raw,
disciplined youths, as ignorant of this
rld as of the world to come. We have
n Jesus proceed to discipline this band,
which is the same thing, to make them
ciples. We have seen Him in that course
discipline follow the natural order of the
velopment of human sympathy — proceed
m the rare to the common, from the ab-
mal to the universal. He has step by step
n leading the mind of the disciple from the
ne circle into a wider circle, from sympathy
a few into sympathy with the multitude.

But in this desert of Bethsaida the Mast
has taken a step beyond even that; He ha
sought to make the multitude *themselv*
disciples. For remember, that is the re
significance of the first communion. It
a communion. It is not merely a giving
bread; it is a passing of bread. Every ma
in this feast who is ministered unto becom
himself a minister. It is not the simp
reception of a gift; it is the reception of
gift with the view to communicate it. This
a new departure in the gospel of Jesus. Th
multitude have become themselves a ministr
Jesus Himself is impressed with the step
advance. He reveals in His own person a
experience new to His disciples; 'At th
hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit.' I understand th
words to mean, 'This is one of the rare occ
sions on which Jesus showed exuberant joy.'
do not think the conclusion to be convey
is that His natural temper was melancholic.
think Jesus was by nature joyous. I cann
hear His notes of exclamation on the lily
the field and the bird of the air without feeli

nat He was open to impressions of gladness om the *natural* world. But the world with hich Jesus had to deal was not the natural orld; it was the sphere of the human. What e missed in the human was just the *presence* joy. Nature made Him glad; man made im grave. He felt what a difference there as between the multitude of the lilies and the ultitude of human souls. He felt that the rmer grew spontaneously, that the growth of e latter was impeded. He felt that what im-ded the growth of the latter was the absence joy, the presence of care, the vision of a cloud. Jesus, then, was made sad by *man's* sadness. is shows that joy was in the *nature* of Jesus. e writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has a rious expression, 'Consider Him who endured is contradiction of sinners *against Himself*.' es it not imply that he regarded the sorrows Jesus as thrust upon Him from the outside, foreign to His original nature? We speak the 'Man of sorrows.' Yet I think the epest note in the soul of Jesus was not row but joy. There is a ring of optimism

about Him which no cloud can wholly repress which brings a voice of comfort even to His darkest hour. It was this underlying capacity for joy that really accounted for the exuberance of this moment of gladness. Jesus looked upon the joy of the human multitude. For the first time in His experience they seemed to have caught the spontaneity of the lily of the field. At the sight of their return to natu ralness Jesus Himself bounded back to His original spirit, to His native air of brightness His actual experiences of gladness may have been fewer than His experiences of pain; but this is only to say that He was for years out of His element. The pain came from His environment; the joy was all His own.

But let us consider more deeply this presen burst of joy. Is it not based on a strang ground? 'At that hour Jesus rejoiced i spirit and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lor of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid thes things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes; even so, Fathe for so it seemed good in Thy sight.' For

pirit like that of Jesus one would think this
o subject of congratulation. Why thank the
ather for limiting a benefit, nay, for limiting
he only benefit which in the eye of Jesus was
orth possessing? He was joyous over the
ladness of the poor; but why congratulate
Himself that the poor are to get a revelation
hich shall be concealed from the rich? To
ejoice at the opening of a door was well;
ut if the opening of one door caused another
oor to shut, ought not this to have been a
amping of His joy? What real good could
ter all be reaped by the elevation of one
ass through the suppression of another? It
quite possible that the care thrown upon *me*
ay lift *you* into spontaneity; but in that case
will to the spectator be a mixed gratification.
the multitude are made happy by the
npoverishment of the rich, if the gospel is
vealed to babes in order that the wise and
udent may be excluded from heaven, then
s the kingdom of Christ simply substituted
ne caste for another, and there is no adequate
round for the joy of Jesus.

But to read thus is utterly to *mis*read. The joy of Jesus was actually occasioned by the opposite feeling. Where to Him lay the hope involved in the conversion of the multitude? Was it that a class which until now was despised had succeeded in supplanting the class which had towered above it? No; it was that a class had been illuminated which possessed an element common to *all* classes. The multitude cannot understand what the wise and prudent understand; but the wise and prudent can all grasp what the multitude understand. If you reveal a truth to the rational inquirer you reveal it to the comparatively few; but if you reveal it to babes you tell it to all. We are not all profound reasoners, but we all possess an element of childhood. There is not a man in this world who does not keep in his heart a survival of the child. We are not like the butterfly that leaves its former self behind when it begins to soar. We carry that self along with us on our upward flight. Nay, I doubt if our flight itself is not winged by the spirit of our child

ood. No memories survive like childhood's emories; no hopes are so tenacious; no iths are so permanent. There are times in hich intellectual belief seems wrecked on ne rocks of science and when on every side eason looks for land in vain. Yet faith ides, and abides through the survival of ildhood. The associations of the old home, ne memories of the family altar, the words at mother's knee, the reminiscences of a Sabbath chool, the echoes of voices that were once fted in praise and are now unheard among en—all these bind us to the shore. The stinct of the child within us outweighs the eason of our riper years.

In the light of this fact let us now read again is remarkable outburst of the joy of Jesus; e shall see that it can only read in one way. Why does He address the Father as 'Lord of eaven and earth'? Is it to round a phrase f invocation? Jesus never does that; He mploys no idle word. He calls the Father Lord of heaven and earth' because He is inking of the Father's universality. And

why at this time is He thinking of the universality? It is because in His own ministry the Father has just given a proof of it. He has called to the service of the kingdom the men of low degree. He has called them by an appeal to the child-nature which is their only nature. That call is a voice to all mankind, for all men have the nature of the child. If it had spoken even to the eye or to the ear it would not have been universal. physical beauty requires a *sense*; cultured music demands a *training*. But the life of childhood is in every man—rustic and philosopher, peasant and peer. Time cannot outgrow it; experience cannot drown it; sorrows cannot starve it; arguments cannot kill it. It remains steadfast amid the varied, changeless amid the mutable—the same yesterday and to-day and for ever.

If I were allowed to paraphrase this exuberant utterance of Jesus, I should put it thus: 'Lord of the wide spaces, Thou hast been worthy of Thy wideness. Thou hast revealed Thyself through a glass that belongs

o all men. Thou hast not appealed to a *rare* gift. Thou hast not spoken to the man of genius *in* his genius. Thou hast spoken to him and to all others through a chink which has been left open in the wall of every heart—the instinct of the child. Thou hast addressed a universal faculty; therefore it becomes possible for all men to hear.'

The joy of Jesus, then, came from the prospering of His cause. But let us not forget that there was in it an element deeper than even that. It was the fact that the prospering of His cause was a compensation to the *Father*. This I take to be the meaning of the seemingly irrelevant words which follow: 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father.' I understand Jesus to say: 'I have undertaken this mission for the *sake* of the Father. I began it with the view of making up to Him for what the world had *failed* to give Him. It is for this I have sought to yield myself to His will; it is for this I have sought to bring others to His will. I should like to make amends to Him for the long neglect He has suffered in the

past. Therefore it is that I rejoice to-day over this first communion, this first meeting with the hands of the multitude. It is a step of restitution to the Father—a short step, a feeble step, but still a step in the right way.' That is what Jesus meant, and it is deeply significant. It tells us that in the mind of Jesus the idea of atonement is the dominant idea. The satisfaction of the Father is with Him a perpetually present aim. It is not merely something which He hopes to achieve by one isolated act in the future. It is something which He would accomplish by gradation—which He would mature by life and crown by death. Every step in the achieving of that purpose is to Him a step of gladness; every retardation of that purpose is to Him the heavy foot of care. The ultimate source of the joy of Jesus is the sense that joy is passing through the heart of His Father.

ENTER, then, my soul, into the joy of thy Lord. It is a vicarious joy—the joy for another; but it is not on that account

oreign to *thee*. Bethink thee, how few of a nan's desires in this world are for himself lone! When he strives for honours, he has riends whom he wants to make glad. When e strives for wealth, he has, in fact or in rospect, those whom he fain would nourish. esus asks from thee nothing that is unhuman vhen He bids thee enter into His joy. He sks thee to put thyself sympathetically in he place of the Father, to say, 'Will not this ladden His heart?'—to rejoice with the hought of *His* joy. That is the joy of thy ord; enter within its gates. Put thyself nto sympathy with the aims of the all-Father. When thou seest a deed of kindness, say 'How lad the *Father* will be!' When thou hearest f a life redeemed, say 'How glad the Father vill be!' When the calendar of crime is essened, say 'How glad the Father will be!' When a mission field is ripe for harvest, say How glad the Father will be!' So shall thy eart beat responsive to the Heart of the niverse; so shalt thou enter into the joy of hy Lord.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE UNCLOUDED MOMENT

In the stage at which we have now arrived we have had a glimpse of the Portrait at a very unwonted angle. We have seen the countenance of Jesus lit up with an expression of cloudless joy. I cannot yet leave this place in the gallery; it is a point of observation which throws a new light upon many things. Let us stand for a few moments longer in this spot so full of fresh tints, so rich in varied aspects.

I have said that Jesus was standing on a wider plane than any He had hitherto occupied. I have always indeed regarded the experience described in the closing verses of Matthew xi as marking the distinctive dividing line in the life of Jesus. It is the boundary between the old and the new. I should divide the life of Jesus into two great parts. The one ends with

he first, the other culminates with the second, ommunion. In the one we witness the teps by which Jesus sought to descend into numanity; in the other we behold the process by which Jesus strove to draw humanity up to *Him*. The symbol of the one was the breaking of bread in the desert; the symbol of the other was that broken body which Jesus said should draw all men unto Himself.

It is at the close of this first period that we have found Jesus bursting forth into an expression of exuberant joy. I regard this as the most unclouded moment He had yet experienced—the most unclouded He ever *was* to experience previous to the shadows of the cross.[1] No previous moment had revealed such unqualified triumph; no future moment was to reveal such a conquest of care until the utterance of the final charge, 'Go ye and teach all nations.' In the second period we stand for the most part beside His *cross*; here we stand in front of His crown. We have seen the

[1] The Transfiguration was *not* such a moment, as I may hereafter have occasion to show.

cause of His joy. His mission had been victorious, and that victory had been the Father's approving smile; more effectually than the voice on the banks of Jordan had it said, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' It was the time when a new force had been gathered into the kingdom. The multitude had ceased to be mere spectators; they had become actors in the scene; they had helped to pass the cup. There was visible the dawn of a wider ministry than men had yet seen; it was meet to make merry and be glad.

But in the passage from Matthew—which gives the fullest account of this matter—the main stress is laid on the *effect* of this joy of Jesus. After lifting up His eyes to heaven in a flash of rapture He bends them down to earth in a gaze of pity: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' I have elsewhere pointed out the comprehensive sweep of this sympathy.[1] It covers every form of possible suffering, for

[1] *My Aspirations*, p. 72

here are only two classes, after all—those who toil and those who bear. But what I wish to point out now is the seeming paradox in the present origin of this sympathy. Is it not a strange thing that the hour of Christ's exuberant personal *joy* should be the hour of His intense sympathetic *pain*? We do not wonder that in contemplating the *cross* He should have drawn all men under the wing of His compassion. But that the most exhaustive expression of sympathy with human toil and human heaviness should have come from one unique moment of absolute rapture, that the downward glance of pity should have followed immediately upon the upward look of triumphant joy—this is something which makes us wonder.

And yet there is no ground for wonder. It is quite true, as I have said in foregoing chapters, that sympathy with sorrow requires personal *experience* of sorrow. But it is equally true that personal experience of sorrow demands the knowledge of a previous *joy*. I cannot feel for the weary and the heavy-laden

unless I myself have felt the weariness and the weight; but I never could have known these experiences unless I had first known their opposites. Every complaint on my part supposes the interruption of a previous joy and it is to the joy and not to the grief that the heart makes its ultimate appeal in relieving human pain.

All our charities must have a background of optimism. Where have our asylums for the blind originated? Not from blindness, but from sight. We are absolutely safe in affirming that a world of born-blind men would never have devised such institutions, any more than a world of the insane would have founded lunatic asylums. The Son of Man had the constitution of human nature. His sympathy with pain came from His experience of pleasure. He must have had a peculiarly vivid sense of His own capacity for joy. 'I will give you rest'—the pronoun is emphasised in the Greek. When one professes to have a special power of giving rest he must also profess to have specially known the charm of

s sensation. The ultimate source of Christ's
arity toward the struggling masses was, like
at of all charity, an impression of the delight
rivable from the opposite experience; His
mpathetic pain had its root in a personal joy.
If so, where could this sympathetic pain find
more appropriate moment for its expression
an this moment of unclouded radiance?
ne desert of Bethsaida seems at first sight
e antithesis of those blue heavens to which
e eyes of Jesus were lifted up in rapture.
ut in reality the uplifted gaze of rapture was
e fitting preparation for the downward look
pity. It was from the height of His *rest*
at Jesus viewed His own moments of struggle
the past; His 'rejoicing in spirit' implies
e memory of a weight from which He had
en set free. Even so it was from the height
rest that He looked at the struggling multi-
le. Their struggle, methinks, never seemed
hard to Him as then—never so heavy and
uous as when it stood out against the
kground of an opposite experience already
lised as a present possession.

What, now, was the nature of this rest which Jesus promised? That question is best answered by asking another—what was the nature of that rest which Jesus *felt*? He Himself points us to this mode of inquiry: 'Take *my* yoke upon you'; 'Learn of *me*'; '*My* yoke is easy and my burden is light.' What, then, are we to learn of *Him*? Listen again: 'Ye shall find rest unto your souls.' When He says 'rest unto your *souls*,' He tells us in effect that the secret of His own rest came from within. If you take my chronology, if you regard the exaltation of Jesus as an accompaniment of the first communion, you will see that it actually was so. There had come no change to the *outward* life of Jesus, except in the *increase* of His labours and the *augmentation* of His burdens. There was no diminution of arduous work, no relaxation of the yoke of humanity. The multitude were still there with their pains and their penalties; the wilderness had *not* broken into singing, the desert had *not* begun to blossom as the rose. But through that multitude there had passed a change of

thought. They had come to *think* differently —that was all. But that was a transformation of the whole environment. Without lifting a grain of sand it redeemed the waste places of the desert. Without lessening one hour of toil it made the yoke of Jesus easy and His burden light. A man may do the same amount of work for another man's child as he does for his own; but he is not bearing in each case the same amount of *yoke*. The multitude had at first been mere spectators of Jesus. His work for them had been simply a work of pity, and therefore it had involved weariness. But when they entered into the relation of *love* to Jesus, when they accepted from Him the hand of fellowship, the token of communion, they changed His pity into sympathy. Jesus conceived for them the interest of a blood-relationship; He had the same work for His *hands*, but He had found 'rest unto His *soul*.'

Such I understand to be the biographical foundation of these remarkable words. And now, having acquired the experience for Himself, Jesus proclaimed it to the multitude. 'Ye

shall find rest unto your souls.' It is a strange message to proclaim to the multitude, a strange ground of hope to set before the toiling masses! One would imagine that what *they* wanted was to find rest for their *bodies*. One would think the deepest need of earthly comfort on the part of the working classes of that day was just the relaxation of labour, just the lifting of life's burdens. It sounds at first almost like a mockery to hear one address these struggling classes as if they were intellectual sceptics or anxious inquirers. Is it not an ignoring of their actual environment to treat them simply as the pupils in a school, and to prescribe for them a purely mental food—'Ye shall find rest unto your *souls*'?

I answer, No. I say that this promise of mental rest is of all others the promise most appropriate to the toiling masses of that day. For, I want to direct attention to the fact that what made that day to the labouring classes harder than our day was not the comparative *amount* of servile labour; it was the degradation involved in servile labour. To the eye

of that Roman world the labour of this multitude was ignoble, for, whether hired or unhired, it was servile labour. Startling as it may sound, it is profoundly true that the main weight which pressed upon the workmen of that day was the weight of an idea, of a thought. Probably they did not do more work than is now done in the household by every good mother in England. But the difference lay here—to the mother it is a glory; to them it was a shame. Even from a physical point of view the source of their weariness was an idea, and the rest they needed was rest *from* an idea. They were in a state of unrest, not because they moved the hands and the feet, but because their *mind* was carrying a burden. Their toil was a badge of inferiority. They bore the name of servant, and the name of servant was the mark of low caste. What they did was done without enthusiasm, because it was done without the impulse of self-will; they felt that they were not their own.

Therefore it was that Jesus proposed to impart rest, not from without, but from within.

Any other proposal would have been beside the mark. If their outward burdens had been diminished by one-half they would have remained equally heavy-laden, for the *thought* that depressed them would have still been there. Jesus proposed to remove the thought, to get rid of the idea. Nay, He proposed to impart a new idea. He proposed to ennoble the act of service, to make the name of servant a synonym not for the lowest but for the highest. He offered to place it where the name of emperor was then placed—on a throne. It was a mental rest He promised, a change of mind; He came to alter not the thing but the thought. Yet the change in the thought has altered the *thing*. This mental rest has become a *mechanical* power, the strongest of all mechanical powers. The transformation in idea has produced a transformation in fact; the rest which began in the soul has penetrated to the body.

Let us take one instance. Jesus claims for His gospel the power to emancipate from slavery: 'The truth shall make you free.' It

has made men free; it has been the main factor in breaking the shackles of the bondsman. But how has it broken these shackles? Not by the command, 'Loose him and let him go.' Christianity for centuries brake no outward bond; it laid no external hand on the fetters of the slave. What, then, has been loosing these fetters? The infusion of a new idea into the souls of all men—master and servant alike. Every man of every rank has his hours of burden-bearing. Jesus proclaimed the dignity of these hours. He told both master and servant that each had his time for service, and that to each that time ought to be a glory—a source not of shame but of pride. The bearing of burdens was in the new regime to be the badge not of degradation but of nobleness; the Son of Man Himself had come to minister. What has been the effect of this message on the life of man? It has been twofold—inward and outward. On the one hand, in his hours of burden he has said, 'This is a phase of human dignity.' On the other hand, he has said, '*Being* a phase of human dignity, it should

not be forced on any man; man's service to his brother should be a voluntary thing.' It is this latter thought which, more than any other, has melted the chains of slavery. I say 'melted,' not 'snapped.' A thought like this has required time to grow, to develop, to ramify. It has had to root out from every department of life associations of exactly the opposite kind. But if slow, the end has been sure. Man's humanity to his brother has come from the sense of his brother's dignity; and the charity which is kind has proceeded from the faith which is aspiring.

O THOU, who hast set before me a door of rest, show me the secret of that door. I often refuse to enter in by it. It seems to lead the wrong way. I want to reach outward fields, and it ushers me *in*doors; it is a rest 'unto the *soul*.' Teach me my error in refusing to enter in. Teach me that to reach the outward fields I must pass through the house of the soul. I have tried to get into rest by

another way. I have strayed through the paths of pleasure; I have lain down in green pastures; I have walked beside the quiet waters; but I have forgotten the 'restoring of my *soul*.' Restore my soul, O Lord; before all things, give me *in*door rest. In vain shall I lie in the green pastures if there is no summer in my *heart*. In vain shall I walk by the quiet waters if there is no stillness in my *mind*. Put summer in my heart; put stillness in my mind; and then the pastures will all be green and the waters will all be quiet. Let me come into the outward fields through the postern gate of my own dwelling. All things will smile if my *heart* smiles; all things will speak peace if my *spirit* is calm. I shall fear no valley of humiliation, I shall dread no shadow of care, when Thou shalt give rest unto my *soul*.

CHAPTER XXV

THE VOICE TO THE MULTITUDE

I HAVE one other glance to cast at the phase of the Portrait we have been considering. In this moment of exuberant joy, and in the midst of His invitation to the labouring and the laden, Jesus utters these remarkable words, 'I am meek and lowly in heart.' That they express on the part of Jesus a retrospective consciousness of the secret of His human development I have no doubt. But we are to consider here not the retrospective but the present meaning of the words. Jesus has promised the multitude rest. Although theirs is a physical burden, He has promised them rest through the mind—rest to the soul. As a cure for their outward ailments He has virtually bidden them accept *Him* as their teacher. What in this light is the meaning

of the words, 'I am meek and lowly in heart'? It is clearly this: 'Do not fear that in coming to my teaching you will need to rise too high in the scale of intellect. You will not need to rise at all. I will come down to *you*. I will do with the intellectual bread as I did with the physical bread—break it. I am quite fit to descend to your capacity. I can bring my revelation into the valley; I can, like the Father, make it known to babes. No teacher shall be simpler in his tuition, for simplicity belongs to knowledge and not to ignorance; it is the highest who best serve the lowest.'

The words, then, were prompted by the impulse to reveal. I cannot but direct attention to the fact that this impulse came forth so powerfully at this particular moment. It was a moment of joy, exuberant joy. It is when the spirit is joyful that it is most revealing. I have often been struck with words written by the author of the Acts. He tells that a disciple said of the Master, 'Being exalted, He hath shed forth this which you see.' 'Being exalted, He hath shed forth'—

exaltation always helps revelation. I do not think grief does; the hour of depression is not commonly an hour of revealing. But joy opens the gates of the spirit. It unbars the windows of the soul and lets us see through. It gives back the natural tendency to the human heart—the tendency to speak out that which is in it. It is joy and not sorrow that says, 'Let there be light.' As I believe in the human development of the Son of Man I am not afraid to apply the principle to Jesus.

What, then, is this intellectual lowliness of Christ? It is the adoption of that form of teaching which is called speaking in parables —clothing a truth in the dress of a story. I do not mean to say that it owed its adoption to the desert of Bethsaida. I mean that in the desert of Bethsaida Jesus told the multitude He would ever give them this bread. What, then, was this bread? Where lay the educative element of the parable? I think there is a prevalent misconception on this point. The popular answer is, 'The parables appealed to the homespun experience of the

working classes.' That was their picture; but I doubt very much if it was their lesson. A deeper consideration may tend to modify our view that the lowliness of Christ's teaching involved also a lowliness of aim.

Let me lead you back to the *ground* of Christ's exuberant joy — 'I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast revealed these things unto babes.' It was a recognition of the fact that the Divine education of man was to begin by an appeal to the child. Now, in the life of the child, what is the first thing we seek to educate? Is it the eye? the ear? the hand? No; in order to train these we must first rouse another faculty. What is that? It is the sense of wonder. We do not need philosophy to tell us that. Ask the nurse, ask the mother, how she tries to stimulate the child's outer sense. She will tell you it is by wakening an *inner* sense — wonder. She points the child to certain objects by notes of exclamation, by cries of admiration, by questions suggesting astonishment — what is that! do you see that! We are told that

the children of Israel were fed by manna. The word 'manna' means 'What is it?' In this sense all children are fed by manna; they enter the world's palace through the gate of wonder.

Now, in dealing with the multitude, Jesus proposed to follow the method of the mother with the child—to begin by stimulating their wonder. The main object of the *parable* was to wake this wonder. It was not to teach them prosaic or homespun things; it was to show them that even prosaic things have an element which puzzles the onlooker. If He takes them to their own fireside, it is to show them that the sparks fly upward. If He brings them along a familiar road, it is that He may lead them to a barred gate. If He conducts them through the natural world, it is that in the natural world they may find spiritual law. The essence of the parable in Christ's view is not what it reveals but what it conceals. Its object is to rouse a feeling of mystery, a sense that there is something hid under the common soil. The discovery that in our most

familiar sight there is more than meets the eye, in other words, the discovery that something is *concealed*, is in the view of Jesus the most valuable of all revelations. The parable causes the multitude to exclaim, 'Behind the veil! Behind the veil!'

Do you doubt this exposition? Listen, then, to what seems to me a direct affirmation of it on the part of Jesus. The disciples ask Him, 'Why speakest Thou to the multitude in parables?' If the essence of a parable was its prosaicness, they ought to have thought it very appropriate to the multitude. Clearly they did *not* think it appropriate; they thought the lesson to the multitude beyond them. Listen now to Christ's answer: 'Because it is given unto *you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but unto them which are without, all things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and that hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and I should heal them.'

Let me try to paraphrase this answer of

Jesus: 'You, my earliest friends, have come to know that there are things, yea, even things of experience, beyond the veil of sense. But the outside multitude have all their lives been feeding on the eye and ear; they have faith in nothing which they cannot see or taste or handle. I should like to teach them the mystery that lies in their own sphere. I should like to show them that the world which they call real is surrounded by depths unfathomable. I should like to wake them to the truth that in the very things which they see there are problems which they cannot understand, that in the very objects they think most familiar there are secrets which no man can penetrate. Therefore it is that I have bid them consider how the lily grows, and ponder how the bird of the air supports its wing; it is that they may learn that in the midst of sight they are in the presence of the unseen. Therefore it is that I give them parables from their own rural life—to make that rural life itself a subject of speculation. I wait for their wonder. The moment when they begin to

wonder will be their turning-point—their converting point. I should not like to miss that moment; whenever it comes their chance of being healed has come. There may be seed below, which in the hour of waking wonder may leap into life. Let me labour at the parable lest I lose the golden grain.'

Such is my reading of a passage which expositors have tortured to make it say the opposite of what is its literal meaning. You say, Am I to believe that Jesus spoke in parables to the multitude in order to conceal truth? No, not to *conceal*—it was to reveal that something was *already* hid. What is wonder but just a waking to the sense that there is something hid? Happy are the multitude that are so awakened! Our first years are not years of much reverence. We look upon religion as having its special sphere of mystery from which common things are excluded. It is a moment of glorious revelation when a man can see mystery in common things, when he can say, 'I see, and yet I do not understand.' It is what Wordsworth calls

a 'presence that disturbs'; but it is glorious. It is a mist before the eyes; but it means heat, not rain. It is seemingly a barred gate; but it is really the first step of entrance within the holy temple.

I have said that the disciples were impressed with the inappropriateness of the parable to the multitude. And the reason is plain. The disciples underrated the capacity of the multitude. Jesus had a much higher sense of their capacity than His disciples had, because He had a much higher sense of the capacity of childhood. The parable problem was only a part of the *childhood* problem. When little children were brought to Jesus the disciples forbade them. Why? Because they thought Jesus was abandoning 'the *mysteries* of the kingdom.' In truth it was the reverse. Jesus received the little children with a view to lead them to these mysteries by another way. They could not find them by reflection, but they could reach them by wonder. The disciples were thinking of a child's simplicity; Jesus was considering its power to scale the

heights: 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' The disciples viewed the child as helpless for spiritual flight; the eye of Jesus rested on its hidden wing.

And this explains something which must have struck every student of the mind of Jesus—His love for children. I suppose about the *fact* there is no doubt. It meets us directly or indirectly on every page of the sacred narrative. It lies at the root of His parabolic teaching; it is the light of His unclouded moment; it is the centre of His message to the apostolic ring. But more than all these do we note His familiar name for His disciples—'These little ones.' We can understand why it should have been applied, as it was applied, to the pupils in a Jewish school; but that Jesus should have made it a term of endearment for grown men seems strange. He was not anxious to establish an analogy between Himself and the Jewish teachers; why, then, call His followers by a name which suggested the *pupils* of these teachers? The answer is luminous—it is because it was to

Him a dear name, a precious name, a name of fond associations. It is because nothing suggested to Him so much endearment as that epithet 'Little one'; He could use no name more tender to His own heart. He gives them other epithets in official moments; He calls them servants; He calls them disciples; He calls them friends. But in the hour of danger, in the hour of need, in the hour of coming trial, the old name re-asserts itself, and the deepest instinct of His heart reveals itself. There is a whole volume of biography in this one voice of Jesus, 'These little ones.'

And whence Christ's love for the child-nature? Was it the helplessness of that nature? No, it was its latent energy. It was because He saw more chance of combustion here than anywhere else. There was more possibility of lighting here the fire He came to kindle — that fire whose first spark is wonder, and whose final blaze is revelation. The first spark was lighted by the parable. Jesus said to the child-nature which lay in

the heart of the multitude, 'What you see on earth is like something in heaven; guess what it is.' He never tells them till they give it up. The guess is to Him a Divine thing even though it be wide of the mark. The seeking for the gate and the knocking at the gate have a value apart from the opening of the gate. It may be a great thing to have a mystery *solved*; but to manifest that there *is* a mystery is, I think, a work greater still.

O THOU, who art the door into all truth, reveal to me that there is a time to *knock* as well as a time to open. I am often distressed at the barriers to my sight. I say at these times, 'If I could see clearly, Thou wouldst be pleased with me, Thou wouldst come to me.' It never strikes me that the obscure moment is *itself* Thy coming. Teach me that truth, O Lord. Let me learn that Thy coming is ever with clouds. Reveal to me, as to Saul of Tarsus, that Thy glory begins by blinding the natural eye. When

I wake to a world of wonder, when I ask, like the Israelites, 'What is it?' do not let me think this a profane questioning; do not let me imagine that it parts me from *Thee*. Tell me that the knocking is a portion of the prayer, that the questioning is an act of the service. Tell me that I have learned the silence by hearing Thy step, that I have learned the darkness through the rising of the dawn. So shall my hour of inquiry be an hour of deep solemnity; so, when the clouds have gathered, shall I say, 'Behind the veil! Behind the veil!'

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LINE OF TRANSITION

I HAVE now traced the course of Jesus down one half of the Pauline ladder. You will remember how Paul describes it—as a descent from the mount to the valley. We have followed, so far, the steps of this process. We have seen Jesus begin by 'emptying Himself' of all conscious power—consenting to be led blindfold by the Father's will. We have seen Him begin His mission standing on the height with only a vague and undetailed view of the work before Him—taking, indeed, the form of a *servant*, but as yet rather of the angel than of the man. Then we beheld Him in the likeness of man—inaugurating a league of pity and training its members for the field. At last, where we now stand, we see Him in what Paul calls 'the likeness of *men*'—of ordinary, working, struggling men. In the intercourse

with that multitude in the desert of Bethsaida. He meets with humanity on its secular side. Instead of insisting that they shall rise to *Him*, He goes down to *them*, and breaks to them the bread of communion on their own ground. The first stage of that communion is now complete; Jesus has entered into fellowship with the secular world. Its second and higher stage is still to come; the secular world must enter into fellowship with Jesus.

The opening of this second period is the real beginning of the life of the Man of sorrows, for it is the lifting of man's moral as distinguished from his physical burdens; it is Christ's bearing of human sin. It will, when it comes, be an experience foreign to Jesus. It will be more foreign to Him than the sorrows of the desert multitude. To commune with the physically toiling, to be in contact with the physically laden, was not alien to the soul of Jesus; but to be in contact with evil *was*. When this second period comes it will reveal to Jesus a new experience; it will overshadow the ideal of His approaching kingdom. The

point is one of such deep significance that I should like to dwell upon it for a moment.

Jesus had in His soul the ideal of a future kingdom. I think this ideal blazed out more brightly after the success of the first mission. I have no doubt whatever that to the human soul of Jesus there was present at this time the hope of a near realisation ; this is the view of most religious thinkers, and particularly of the most evangelical. I have no doubt that, as He stood in the desert of Bethsaida, and surveyed the first act of Christian communion, there swam before His eyes the prospect of a kingdom not only to be realised on earth but to be realised in His own visible presence. He had come to give His life to the Father in whichever way it might be demanded, nay, He was giving His life now. But why should not the result of this *living* surrender be the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness, a kingdom which He Himself should remain to build, and whose glory He should witness with His earthly sight?

So Jesus asked Himself. He asked Himself

that question in spite of the labour and the ladenness which He saw in the desert. One would think the sight of the toiling multitude would have dispelled so near a prospect. So it would, if Jesus had looked upon life's physical burdens as incompatible with His kingdom. But He did not. It did not occur to Him that these must be abolished to make room for the reign of righteousness. On the contrary, His promise of rest to the *soul* implied that the coming of the kingdom need not wait for their abolition. The reign of righteousness was to be manifested precisely in the *support* of those physical burdens from which the reign of *un*righteousness had recoiled. Jesus is never weary of emphasising the inwardness of His kingdom. It is at the root of every parable—the sower, the leaven, the mustard-seed, the pearl. If anything is certain in the world it is that, in the view of Jesus, the coming of the kingdom of God had to wait for no external condition. Its coming was to be 'without observation,' and therefore it was to be independent of outward things.

But was it to be independent also of inward things? No; and here lay the possibility for an interrupted ideal. The kingdom was not to be alien to the continuance of human *toil*, but it was to be alien to the continuance of human sin. For, what was this kingdom which glittered in the eyes of Jesus? Was it a hereditary monarchy? Was it a republic? Was it a democracy? No, it was none of these—or rather in one sense it was all of them. It was a community in which men were to start equal, inasmuch as all former grounds of distinction, without being superseded, were to be deemed irrelevant. But by and by the highest type of character was to come to the front, and rule by moral influence. Starting from the level of a spiritual democracy, the best men were to rise to the surface, and reign; and their power was to be proportioned to their excellence. Paul says, in speaking of the resurrection life, 'Every man shall rise in his own order.' Where did he get that? From a heavenly vision? No, from a verbal or written record of the earthly teaching of Jesus.

He got it from the parables—from the seed that bore in different degrees, from the talents that received their respective rewards. The kingdom of Jesus was to be a kingdom whose thrones and principalities and powers were to be filled by the different grades of the life of sacrifice. The men dead to self—'the dead in Christ'—were to rise first. The least were to be the greatest. The humanitarian souls were to lead in the van. They were to lead because they had most power to bend. They were to be appointed judges of the world's sin because they were at the head of the league of pity. Jesus Himself declared that His right to sit on the throne of judgment was to rest upon the fact, not of His supernaturalness, but of His intense intimacy with the weakness of human nature: 'The Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of *Man*.'

Now, it requires no prophet to see that if ever Jesus is to be wounded it will be here. If ever He is to make the transition from the man of joy to the man of sorrows, it will be

through this ideal of the kingdom. I call this ideal of the kingdom the transition line between the Christ who fed the multitude and the Christ who hung on the cross. If Jesus had merely aspired to be a benefactor, He might have reaped on earth perpetual joy. But that was only one half of the aspiration of Jesus. He had been appeasing the hunger of the multitude, and the thought had given Him joy. But He, too, was hungry, thirsty. There was a part of His nature which earth had not satisfied, which was as much the desert to Him as Bethsaida was to them. He longed for the day when the relation between Him and the multitude should be reversed. At present He was the giver and they were the receivers; He yearned for the time when they should be the givers and He the receiver. He had communed with them on their own ground; He wanted them to commune with Him on His ground. He was seeking a kingdom—a kingdom in which the good should be paramount and the bad subordinate. What if the good should not be found? What if the bad should so out-

number them that a kingdom would be impossible? Would not this be the solitude of the Son of Man? In His deepest nature Jesus had always been alone; no disciple had as yet become a *companion*. But He had been cheered by the *prospect* of a City of God, of voices harmonious with His own. If that prospect should fade, if these voices should cease to sound in the ear of hope, Jesus must be wounded in His innermost heart—His ideal of a *broken* solitude.

Now, even where we stand, the first sight of a cloud appears. It is a little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand; but what startles us is the fact that we have seen it before. As we look closer we remember *where* we have seen it; it was in the first desert—the desert of temptation. There Jesus had received the suggestion of raising a kingdom by force. Here that suggestion is repeated. It comes as the direct result of the great communion miracle. The multitude had received miraculous bread, and they had received it from the hand of Jesus; they had been recognised as a social factor.

They were exultant, they were enthusiastic; and they expressed their enthusiasm in a very drastic manner. They suggested an outward revolution. They would make Jesus a temporal king; they would put Him on the throne of David; they would revive the glories of the ancient Jewish line. That proposal closed the day of triumph with an hour of sadness. In the thought of Jesus, it emptied the desert in a moment; He felt suddenly alone. And because He *felt* alone He desired to *be* alone. He withdrew into the solitude of the mountains. What was the cause of His sadness? Was it because the multitude desired something which He did not desire? No; but because the thing which they desired showed how little they were in sympathy with His real purpose. He felt alone amid the crowd because the ideal of the crowd was miles distant from *His* ideal. There is no loneliness like the separation in *sympathy*—the solitude of the soul. Five thousand may be in contact with your *hand*—as they were with the hand of Jesus in the desert of Bethsaida; but if they are not in contact with

your ideal, if they do not love what *you* love, the desert of Bethsaida remains a desert still.

I call this withdrawal of Jesus into the mountain solitude the crossing of the transition line. It is the first distinctive step in His passage to the cross. From the communion of the desert to the communion of the upper room is a path of ever-deepening sorrow brightened only by one or two partial gleams. It is a path of increasing sorrow because it is a path of increasing solitude. From this time the crowd begins to melt away. It is the period when He is 'found in fashion as a man' —a battered, broken, wayfaring man. Men had expected to find a king; here they ask, 'Where are the signs of royalty!' From this time forth I date the beginning of the change from the man pressed by the crowd to the man who trod the winepress alone.

Singularly enough, immediately after the scene in the desert, the historian puts upon the canvas a picture which, to my mind, bears the stamp of the change. The impression is all the more remarkable because the attitude

ascribed to Jesus is apparently one of triumph. In the dead of night He is seen issuing from His mountain retreat and walking alone upon the sea. As our eye meets that strange apparition, what is the thought registered in our hearts? If a preacher were asked to deliver a sermon embodying what the scene symbolises, what would its moral be? The majesty of Jesus? The power of Jesus? The fearless calm of Jesus? I do not think it would be any of these. To my mind, the overmastering suggestion would be the *solitude* of Jesus. To be alone on the sea must be the acme of loneliness; to be alone on the sea at the dead of night must be solitude personified. One man out of the mass of humanity attempts to come to Him; it is Peter Bar-Jona, 'Lord, if it be Thou, bid me that I come to Thee on the water'; but even *he* falters, and, instead of bringing a companion's strength, requires to be himself supported. Leaving in abeyance that supernatural element which lies beyond my subject, and keeping the eye purely on the picture as

it has been painted, I see in this narrative a prelude, a foreshadowing. It is the anticipation in miniature of what is to be unfolded through many experiences. To Him there are *indeed* coming the watches of a night in which He is to walk upon a lonely sea, in which He is to come into contact with depths that none can share. The Son of Man walking alone upon the sea by night *may* be a spectacle of majesty, but it is the majesty of a solitary grief that sinks not beneath its flood of waters.

And yet, this second period, this period of loneliness, is to lead to a communion compared to which the crowd in the desert of Bethsaida is as a drop to the ocean. The lonely road is, after all, to be the real way to the City of God. It is a curious question: What would have been the effect if Jesus had *died* amongst the mountains of Bethsaida? What impression would He have left upon the world if He had passed away in what would have been called the blaze of His fame? And the answer must be, 'Very little.' 'How do you know that,' you say, 'seeing the event has not taken place?'

Because we of modern times have been permitted to watch the pilgrimages of human thought to the shrine of Jesus. And, strangely enough, they have all taken the lonely road. They have crowded the places once the most silent. It is the Cross that has drawn the thoughts of all men—even Easter Day is a magnifying of the Cross. Christmas is crowned, but it is a borrowed crown—borrowed from Calvary; we keep Christmas Day because it is the prelude to another Day—the Day on which the Son of Man completed His obedience by death. The Sermon on the Mount is crowned, but it, too, has a borrowed crown; what meaning would its bold paradoxes convey unless reflected in the light of a victorious Calvary! The main attraction of the life of Jesus has centred round His second period. Why? I do not ask here why it is so for the Christian; but why is it so for the world as a world? Is it that this period is more full of miracles? It is *not* more full. Is it because it is richer in moral teaching? In mere moral teaching it is less rich. It is because this

second period has revealed something more original than miracle, more original than moral teaching. It is because men have seen a new kind of strength, a new order of heroism, a new estimate of greatness. They have seen force measured, not by what it has done, but by what it has forborne to do—by its refusal to purchase pleasure at the expense of purity. They have seen the power of *passive* strength—a strength that can decline to lift its own imprisoning gates—a strength that can bear for love and will not cry. This second period has been a creative period. It is the Cross that has kindled our *admiration* for the Cross. Jesus Himself has wreathed the garland with which the world has crowned Him. The light by which we see Him is the light He has Himself diffused. The music by which He has drawn the crowd is the music of His own Name.

AND now, Son of Man, Thou art going forth upon the sea. Thou art leaving the crowd in Bethsaida that Thou mayest travel

over the lonely deep. May I go with Thee? Bid me that I come to Thee on the waters! When I see Thee on the waters it is not Thy majesty that moves me; it is Thy loneliness. They have all gone away from Thee. The crowds of the first communion have dropped from Thee like autumn leaves. There is no man brave enough to stand beside Thee in the storm; Thou art all alone. Bid *me* come to Thee, O Lord! I have followed Thee in Thy joy. I have been with Thee when the multitude pressed and thronged. I have heard Thy voice of majesty on the Mount. I have seen Thy hand of beneficence break bread in the desert. Whenever I have been in want I have sought Thee. But now *Thou* art to be in want—athirst for human love. The multitude are no longer to be the suppliants; it is Thou. Thine will be a deeper hunger than that of the crowd when Thou shalt stand upon the lonely sea. Thou shalt not go alone; *I* will follow Thee where Thou goest. Through the dark watches of the night, through the cold surgings of the wave, through the vast

spaces of the solitude, I will follow and find Thee. I have bid Thee come to *me* on the *land*; bid me come to *Thee* on the *waters*. Thou hast answered *my* prayer, and I will respond to Thine.

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